that dominated politics on many occasions that resulted in losing of its importance. It can be said, without fear of contradiction, that it is no more that important as it was in 1993-1996.

The failures of the APHC to consolidate the gains that had accrued out of the mass movement of 1990 had challenged the very idea of collective leadership and forum politics.

The concepts of collective leadership and forum politics in the state were born for two reasons, one, Sheikh-Abdullah signing an accord with Mrs. Gandhi without taking people into confidence and two, for the failure of the Plebiscite Front Working Committee in preventing the leadership from signing the accord that brought no political dividends to the state other than power to the Abdullah's of Kashmir. The idea of collective leadership and forum politics seems misconceived in as much as failures of this politics are concerned. Looking in retrospect, the Plebiscite Front did not fail as an organization, in the history of Kashmir after the Muslim Conference of 1931, it was one of the most organized political party that held the promise of taking the "Kashmir struggle" to a logical conclusion. It suffered a reversal more for the catastrophic metamorphoses in the politics of the sub-continent after dismemberment of Pakistan and birth of Bangladesh than its cadres betraying it.

If the APHC (M) succeeds in bringing about the paradigm shift in its structure and emerges as monolith political party, it will be in a position to take many important decisions that so far have suffered for diversity of its leadership and variability in their priorities.

Seen in right perspective, it has been this diversity that has spawned the third-chair-syndrome in our politics. Coming to the elections and single swallow story, the question remains if APHC (M) joins the boycott call given by Syed Ali Geelani or not. If the mood of a section of APHC (M) is an indicator, it would prefer to sit on fence, and it will be left to the septuagenarian leader alone or he may get some support from pro-Independent factions.

In a political scenario, when CPN has not only defeated the 250 old monarchy but also won the elections in Nepal after waging a struggle for long, let me end my column from a quote from Mao Tse-Tung:

"It will not do to sit on the fence; there is no middle road".

Of Political Sound Bites:

Sound of politics! Let me borrow this phrase from much talked about autobiography of L.K. Advani, My Country My Life. This phrase, which is sub-title for chapter dealing with initiative towards bringing in normalcy in the state by "holding a dialogue with moderate faction of Hurriyat Conference did not attract my attention for having caused flutter in the umbrella organization. It caught my imagination for its relevance to the prevailing political scenario in the state.

It is not my subject if all the assertions made by former Deputy Prime Minister or Prime Minister in waiting about his talks with the APHC (M) are a gospel truth or not. It is not my subject at this moment that if there would have been another round of talks in June 2004 between APHC(M) and L.K. Advani ,what would have happened. It is not my subject if the NDA had not been defeated in May, what could have been achieved and what lost by the people of Jammu and Kashmir. I am not to deliberate upon if the state legislature would have different set of people in it than it had after the 2002 elections. I am neither to contest nor vouch for the claim made in the autobiography that as good will gesture, Hurriyat (M) did not give a boycott call of the Lok Sabha elections in 2004.

I am not to debate over the assertions made in the autobiography about the National Conference leaders subtly withdrawing its autonomy resolution for a ministerial berth. These assertions will be perhaps replied by the National Conference Patron and former Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah in his autobiography that he has been writing for past few years. I do not know if he is going to publish his biography before the coming elections or hold it back like some chapter of his autobiography for fear of disturbing "hornets nest".

The phrase attracted my attention for the year 2008 being the elec-

tion year. What would be the sound of politics in the coming mon has been engaging mind of many a political commentators, scribes columnists in the State. Though it will be too early to predict the po cal scene that may emerge in the State in the coming months, but t are sufficient indications that suggest that three types of political tors will be playing their role on the State's political stage in the com elections. One, those who will contest elections without any rese tions, second, fence sitters who will not participate in the election will field proxy candidates and third, those who will boycott the tions.

The first set of actors will include leaders of the main pro-a sion political parties, the National Conference, the Congress, the factions of the Communist Party, the Peoples Democratic Party (P BJP and others. Some political leaders are also expected to join h and launch what they have been terming as third front . There is p bility of new actors like the Awami National Conference (ANC) co out of their political hibernation and contesting the coming elect The Awami National Conference, which in fact is a breakaway grou the National Conference, will be a new face on the election scene anti-incumbency factor may help this new face as it did in 2002 t People's Democratic Party, but it will depend upon its leadersh how well it plays its cards.

The National Conference and Peoples Democratic Party hav ready locked their horns in Kashmir valley and in some Muslim d nated areas of Jammu province. Both these parties have been pl upon the traditional political clichés connected with the Kashmir p lem. They have been trumpeting issues that do not fall within the a of the state legislature at all. The two parties have been building election campaign on the agenda of the "pro-freedom" political ties, perhaps under the belief that the people do not understan limitations of the State Assembly, that it has neither right to endor accession with India nor undo it. The slogans raised by the two p echo like trite sound bites full of boredom. The clichés like self demilitarization, and autonomy and pre-1953 position have lost luster and appeal for the common people. Man in the street fully derstands that state legislature is not competent to send even a s

soldier outside the state not speak of issues like demilitarization, joint management and introduction of duel currency. These issues fall within the domain of powers in New Delhi and Islamabad.

The Pradesh Congress is so far conspicuous on the election scene in Kashmir by its absence. Whether it is indicative of a tacit electoral alliance amongst the coalition partners will be too early to say but so far it has been concentrating in Doda- Bhaderwah areas, once strong holds of the National Conference, and some areas in Jammu. The National Conference which once had a very strong leadership in the Muslim dominated areas of Jammu does not now seem to have credible voices like Maulana Atullah Suharwardy and Abdul Ghani Masrat Fardia. The Congress may be in a position to wrench these once strongholds of the National Conference from it. The BJP, if the mood in Jammu is an indicator, is going to perform better than it did in the previous two elections.

Second important factor is that of proxy candidates. It is history that the political parties that suffer dilemma of participating and not-participating in the elections, once they are announced, have been fielding proxy candidates. This is done with two pronged strategy one, to send a message to the powers in Delhi about its popularity for a better bargain and two, for having stokes in the local politics of a particular area or constituency. I may not debate over this politics, whether it is diabolical or honest to put proxy candidates. In 1971 as a prelude to making a paradigm shift in its politics the Plebiscite Front fielded a proxy candidate from Srinagar Parliament constituency, it was as good as testing the waters. The triumph of the PF supported candidate encouraged the organization to announce participation in the Assembly elections. It was for bad advice of the then Chief Minister, Mir Qasim that New Delhi banned the Plebiscite Front under Unlawful Activities Act and arrested its leadership. Had not GOI banned the organization it would have been in power four years earlier to the 1975 Indira-Sheikh Accord. Many other organizations professing pro-right to self-determination politics in seventies fielded proxy candidates, and some of them won the elections. If seen in right perspective it was assuring and ensuring victory of some of these proxy candidates that took wind out of sails of the pro-right to self-determination politics in the state from

mid seventies to late eighties, when it was reborn. These political fo
had to reinvent themselves and join popular sentiment for remai
relevant. It was more for remaining relevant than for their com
ment to politics of right to self-determination that some politicians jo
the renewed "movement"

Some political leaders professing what they themselves call as "
ratist" politics are caught up on the same crossroads on which P
scite Front was in 1968, when it had received rebuffs after rebuffs
best friends in New Delhi like Jayaprakash Naryan (JP) etc.. This
tion if assured and ensured victory in the coming elections is in a fi
to contest the elections. The agenda of third group is more than o
ous that it is going to boycott the election. Who join the boycott call
who co-operate, will become clear in the coming few months.

Let us wait and watch, as we have been doing for all these yea

Story of Shylocks of Culture Let me today talk outside the real
"Polbus", politics with businesses , a phrase that I had coined so
times back to describe a new phenomenon that overtook Kashmir p
tics at the turn of the past century. The phrase did not only encom
politicians in power but all those who have been looking at politi
commerce. The phrase in fact entails the entire phenomenon of fa
ing of some leaders on the sacrifices offered by people, looting of p
lic exchequer, organizing public meetings for impressing galleries
the capital, hiring professional for showing down the rival poli
groups or parties, hiring audience for the public meetings and in
ring massive expenditures on public meetings.

It is not for the phrase having lost its sheen or having become
or turning hackneyed that I want to move outside its domain; the ph
for many continues to be the summum bonum of politics. The ph
will be more relevant in the coming months, as the days for the e
tions will draw near, there will be a boom of the polbus'. In the co
days undoubtedly money will grow on "proverbial trees" in the s
There will be windfall of millions for some politicians and poli
groups, let us not answer where from!

Answering this question becomes as good as eating the forbid
fruit, thus earning wrath of gods of politics. Let us not earn their w

In the coming months there would be no distress sale but the prices, yes of political workers, will boom and the price tags will have more of tick marks than cross marks. Millions will be spent on poll campaigns, some parties have already engaged big copywriters for deluging the public minds with fake slogans and some are busy in organizing big money from biggest business houses for filling their coffers.

The genesis of phenomenon of polbus should be subject for study for political scientist. It may be too early to say whether it is going to stay for sometime more or vanish from the political scene of the state, but it goes without saying that it has been this phenomenon that created a sharp divide in Kashmir political life. It created a class of haves and have-nots of political leaders and workers. Let me not talk about the haves, who are more than obvious. A new crop of second wrung political leaders and workers was born during past nineteen years, some of them suffered unprecedented trials and tribulations and some remained under detentions for more than a decade. Many of them, despite commitments to their political beliefs, live in political wilderness and majority of them for their living a life in abject poverty can be clubbed as, have-nots.

The new class structure that has emerged in Kashmir politics is in itself a subject that could also fall with the domain of polbus. This class structure raises many a questions , if it is going to gain sanctity as the feudal democracy, a concept born in South-Asia in mid-sixties and has now passed as real democracy. It holds the promise for staying back in the region till alternative voices get strength. It also needs to be understood that if this new class structure in Kashmir politics is forerunner for a bigger political change in the state. If the present set of leadership was going to get relegated to the pages of history much before the predicted dates for such a politics, as transpired at a seminar organized by the Coalition for Civil Society. It in fact is only a matter of time, when this leadership of have-nots gives us surprise after surprise of reasserting with a bang.

When polbus is going to scale new heights and touch new peaks, deserves an in-depth and incisive study in public interest. What prompted me to move out of its domain, was discourse that took place at a function organized by Mass Communication Alumni Association

in Srinagar about a week back. The alumni besides media monge
the state and the central governments and top journalists of the
invited some odd-men like me who were neither "hacks or journa
and nor media managers for participating in the open forum discu
on Challenges and Opportunities of Media in Kashmir.

One of the speakers at the function that was observed to mar
World Day For Freedom of Press said that the media in Kashmi
been ignoring "CULTURE", and it was not getting due space in Kas
press.

The word culture generated a lot of heat and debate. It in
vibrancy in otherwise inanimate discussions and raised questions
if there could be some space for "culture", as understood by the sp
in conflict situations. If culture, means blind imitativeness of the
past. If culture was a manifestation of national identity, what was K
mir identity. Some tried to look for meanings for this word beyon
lex meanings. Some of the speakers tried to analyze the dynamics o
word and its import in conflict situation and how the powers in
state were using it to what they termed as, subverting the moveme
"The Merchants of Culture". It was this most pregnant sentence u
by one of the participants present in the function that made me to th
beyond the realm of polbus' today. The Merchants of Culture soun
like an echo of great Shakespearean drama the Merchant of Venic
started wondering if we had our own Shylocks of culture that alwa
ask for their pound of flesh.

The state undoubtedly has lots of cultural workers and activists wh
have been promoting Kashmir culture genuinely and have enriched lit
erary landscape of Kashmir with their poetry, literature and art but
alongside genuine cultural workers there have been Shylocks of cul
ture also in our society. Though they are a negligible minority but like
scum they have the tendency of forming crust of the society.

It has been these Shylocks that have been pro-active in distorting
Kashmir culture and ethos during past many years. In their endeavo
for earning coveted positions and laurels they have been distorting no
bler concepts like religious tolerance and giving it political connota
tion. It has been the religious tolerance, one of the greatest contribu
tions of Islam to this land, that some have pronounced their phrases fo

religious tolerance as , "colonial discourse. These merchants have been making all out efforts to portray Sheikh-ul-Alam, Sheikh Noor-u-Din Wali the greatest protagonist of social and cultural change in Kashmir as a hermit. It is not that these merchants having corrupted his poetry have been contorting and distorting his verses to suit the political agenda.

With all its pluralism, Kashmir has been a predominantly Muslim society for seven hundred years and it has been none other than Mir Syed Ali Hamadani who transformed Kashmir society and by all standards could be called as founder of modern Kashmir. He not only changed faith of this land but metamorphosed entire social spectrum, changed economic landscape of this land and brought about an intellectual revolution in this land through his writings. The personality of Kashmiri Muslim without Mir Syed Ali Hamadani is incomplete and it has been these merchants of culture who have been making all out efforts to remove this great leader of Kashmiris from their social and intellectual discourses, for petty gains.

These merchants need to understand that the traditions, national goals and process of national development is influenced and determined by thoughts and acts of the people of a nation.

Nation's Heroes Are Nation's iden

Some dates get woven in national memoirs. They get so deeply enm
in the psyche of nations that even sharp and penetrating scalpel
not remove them. It is commemoration of these dates that provid
tity to the nations. Commemorating, the death anniversaries of n
heroes work as potent catalyst for rejuvenating patriotism, invigo
the cowards and energizing the lethargic to work for the national

One of the reviewer's of Laleh Khalils book, Heroes and Ma
Palestine: the Politics of National Commemoration (2007), has ver
written, "In the process of revolution, commemorations become
of mourning and celebration, as death becomes a way of living,
ating life, by other means. The complexity of nationalism and th
sity of sentiments endanger the colonized and give way to socio
cal conditions that valorize the strugglers in such a way that it
fies the masculinity of men."

Other than the dates, whose commemoration valorize the n
and infuses new life in the movements that otherwise seem de
dying, there are dates that are of ephemeral importance. These
retain political significance till the trumpeters remain around an
with a whimper with the passage of time. Only those dates conti
be commemorated that become parts of the national psyche. It
national heroes only that find a niche in the psyche of common p

In Kashmir also, other than the dates highlighted in red on y
wall calendars, signifying national or state holidays, there are
dates picked out on Journalist's calendar. Some dates encircled o
journalist's calendar have been there for past sixty years and some
born about a quarter century back and some appeared after 199

All the political parties have had, on one or the other occ
some dates highlighted on their calendars that were relevant to

politics. The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference for some years observed June 11, with all gusto and enthusiasm. It was on this day that the party was born in 1939, when the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference was renamed Jammu and Kashmir National Conference after a resolution presented by Maulvi Muhammad Syed Masoodi at a party convention. Notwithstanding the resolution getting majority support it was vehemently opposed by chaudarhy Hamidullah Khan, Malvi Rafi-U-Din, Ghulam Haider Gori and Abdul Sattar Gujree in the convention. The Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference besides other dates similarly observed 9 July as an important day in its history. It was on this day in 1947 that the party adopted a resolution on the lawns of the Muslim Park, Jamia Masjid, Srinagar, calling for accession of the state with Pakistan. The resolution that holds key to the Muslim Conference politics and the inheritors of its politics both fake and genuine stated, "This convention of the Muslim Conference after due deliberations has reached to the conclusion that state accession with Pakistan has become imperative because of geographical contiguity, linguistic proximity, cultural unanimity, religious affinity and eighty percent of population being Muslims." (At this juncture of history the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference had majority in the state assembly (Praja Sabha) and resolution according some political commentators had greater legal validity than that of the National Conference leaders. The day was observed by the Muslim Conference cadres with all enthusiasm across the Ceasefire Line and on this side by the leftover cadres of the organization by hoisting flags on lampposts and roof tops. As the time ticked on, many important dates that were being religiously commemorated by the rival political parties lost their political significance for them. After 1947, with the Muslim Conference leaving behind only a sentiment but no organization on this side of LOC, the dates that were commemorated by the party to fortify its ideology and political outlook found no takers. Of all the commemorative dates born before 1947, only 13 July survived the vicissitudes of politics. On this day in 1931, the soldiers of autocratic Dogra ruler fired on Muslims killing twenty one of them with wounds in the chest.

In the post 1947, new dates emerged as benchmarks in contemporary Kashmir history and at different points of times different political

organizations observed these days on both the sides of the st
date that assumed significance for Kashmir politics after 1947 a
vided a cause to observe it, for some political leaders and pa
been 5, January. It was on this day in 1949 that UNCIP passes a
tion stating, ""The question of accession of the state of Jamm
Kashmir to India or Pakistan will be decided through the dem
method of free and impartial plebiscite". October 27 the day w
1947 the first contingent of Indian troops landed at Srinagar Air
another day that continues to be observed variably by different
cal groups. August 9, the day when Sheikh Abdullah was depos
arrested by his friend Jawaharlal Nehru was observed as black
the Jammu and Kashmir Plebiscite Front for about twenty two
On this day the party held public meetings, hoisted black flags o
party offices and workers of party exploded crackers as protest
evenings. The day lost its relevance after Sheikh Abdullah was ind
as Chief Minister and the Plebiscite Front was disbanded.

In mid eighties, 11 February was born as yet another date of
significance for Kashmir politics. It was on this day in 1984, one o
founding leaders of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, Muham
Maqbool Bhat was put to gallows in a jail in New Delhi. This day
initially observed by very few people, with every year rolling atta
more and more significance. And in nineties, like a phoenix, he emer
to dominate the political scene and lead the struggle. His iconic fig
became a rallying point for many and made them to sacrifice their l
for the "cause they believed in".

In 1990, May 21, yet another commemorative day was added
the political calendar of Kashmir. On this day founder President
Jammu and Kashmir Awami Action Committee, Mirwaiz Mol
Muhammad Farooq was assassinated by some un-identified gun men
his residence in Nageen. Who assassinated Mirwaiz and why, is one
the many questions about Kashmir politics that perhaps would nev
be replied truthfully and honestly by any of the contemporary histor
ans.

Mirwaiz Farooq other than being a religious leader was a political
leader of stature. In 1964, when he launched the Jammu and Kashmi
Awami Action Committee, it was seen as rebirth of the Muslim Confer

politics on this side of the state. He not only emerged as credible
e for right to self-determination for the people of the state but was
een as a great advocate of the two nation theory. It was but for his
itical outlook that his name got suffixed with pro-pak in the official

It may be a matter of debate and discussion if he did play the role
t destiny had cast for him, when, after 1968, the mood for a U-turn
State People's Convention in Sheikh Abdullah was more than obvi-
But there can be no denying that he emerged as a strong, perhaps
ngest voice against the Indra-Sheikh Accord of 1975. He succeeded
creating a strong and deep dent that survived only eight months by
ding massive protest rally against the "Invincible." With all limita-
ns his organization suffered from, there can be no dispute over his
eing an icon of struggle for his supporters, who continue to believe in
the Muslim Conference politics to this day.

The Awami Action Committee has been commemorating his "mar-
tyrdom" every year for past eighteen years perhaps to rededicate itself
to his political legacy...

And He who writes his story
Inherits the land of that Story

(Mehmood Darwish)

Skepticism Looms La

It no more brought warmth to benumbed faces. It no more ret
glow to once rubicund faces of Kashmiris when US President G
Bush during a recent meeting with Pakistan Prime Minister Yousu
Gilani in Egypt said that the Kashmir issue was ripe for a perm
solution. It did not make them feel joyous when he appreciated th
two sides had made a lot of progress on the Kashmir issue. The
ment for a common Kashmiri believing in disbelief, far from the
ity.

A similar statement by the United States President, even durin
cold war period in the past would have brightened faces of Kash
It would have strengthened hopes for the resolution of Kashmir p
lem. What has made people skeptical about the statement made by P
dent Bush? Is it despair that has overwhelmed Kashmiris? Is it cyn
of the leaders that has made them look at the statement as nothin
yond rhetoric? Is it because he thinks that the ongoing peace pro
between the two countries is working to his disadvantage? Is his b
unfounded that the LOC after it being completely fenced, has been c
verted into undeclared permanent international border with tacit
proval from people at the top in Pakistan? Is his skepticism founde
the presumption that India and Pakistan have reconciled to LOC
some porosity in it becoming permanent border.

The skepticism amongst Kashmiri about the ending of political
certainty in the state started gaining strength after President Musha
started looking for resolution of the problem outside its legal and
torical framework. His half-baked four point formula followed by m
other proposals outside the fundamental principle of right to self-
termination brought Kashmir case on a slippery wicket. It also divi
Kashmir leaders into two distinct camps, those supporting Presi

scara's formula and those against it. Some of the leaders looked at
formula as a step towards ending political stagnation in the state
some looked at the formula as total betrayal.

Now, after the election the political dispensation in Pakistan has
ndergone a sea change.The President having almost lost his writ in the
estion, that has been dominating public discourse in the state, is, if
e four point formula still holds its relevance or it would get relegated
archives department of Kashmir Affairs ministry. It seems a foregone
nclusion by all stretch of imagination that President Mascara's four
int formula will not be considered nor pursued by the new govern-
ent. The question then remains: what would be Kashmir policy of the
w Pakistan government. Will it pursue the traditional Kashmir policy
it will also look forward for alternative solutions outside the stated
osition. The question needs to be looked into in overall prevailing po-
itical scenario in Pakistan. Ostensibly there are more than two politi-
al power centres presently in Pakistan. One centre is the newly in-
alled government with Syed Raza Gilani as Prime Minister; second
centre is headed by Asif Ali Zardari, all powerful co-chairman of Paki-
stan Peoples Party and third centre is headed by Nawaz Sharif, leader
of the Pakistan Muslim League (N). Have three centers unanimous Kash-
mir policy or they look at this problem, that has played key role in shap-
ing Pakistan's politics in the past, from three different vantage points.
The Pakistan Prime Minister has by and large made it clear that his
government will be pursuing traditional Kashmir policy but at the same
time continuing dialogue with India. Co-chairman of the Peoples Party
had made it more than obvious in his interview with a television chan-
nel that he was interested in normalization of relations with India with-
out allowing Kashmir coming in its way. He had also proposed putting
Kashmir problem in cold storage indefinitely. His statement provoked a
lot of resentment within Pakistan but he did not change his statement
and in a way corroborated it recently while taking to yet another In-
dian News Agency about creation of Trade Zones along India Pakistan
borders. True, President Muslim League (N) did not so far make a di-
rect statement about Kashmir that would indicate clearly his stand on
this problem. But his statement favouring removal of visa system be-
tween the two countries was interpreted as some kind of betrayal of

cause by Pakistan experts. Some saw the statement as supporting an old Nehru formula of India-Pakistan confederation. The proposal was taken by Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah from Jawaharlal Nehru in 1964 to President Ayub and it was rejected by the then Pakistan government.

Apparently, Kashmir, like nuclear policy and relations with China constitutes national policy of Pakistan that does not change with the change of government in that country. If discussion that took place on Pakistan television channels and the opinions that surfaced during India-Pakistan Foreign Minister talks are taken as indicators, there was overwhelming disapproval of General Mascara's post Kargil approach towards Kashmir. But there is a section of Pakistan intelligentsia that continues to support the President Mascara's Kashmir policy. An influential Pakistani Newspaper known for its pro-India leanings in its editorial, vehemently criticized commentators that have been opposing Mascara's formula. In its editorial the paper commented, "It was rather disappointing on Tuesday to see "expert discussions" on most TV channels about Kashmir against the backdrop of the ongoing round of talks between the foreign ministers of India and Pakistan in Islamabad. Not effort was made to put the Indo-Pak talks in perspective and study the present state of the Kashmir issue in the light of the regional and global changes that have come about; nor were the post-Kargil internal changes in Pakistan objectively studied. Indeed, no "expert" was willing to fairly interpret Pakistan's decision, not to link the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline project with the resolution of the Kashmir dispute." The editorial of this newspaper needs not to be viewed in isolation, there is a section of opinion makers in Pakistan that not only advocates continuing of Mascara's Kashmir policy but also pleads for putting it in a perspective because of repeated defeats suffered by the policy of putting it first. Some of Pakistan commentators believe that the magic spell of four point formula had converted even pro-India political parties like PDP and National Conference. A Pakistani columnist recently observed in a Gulf newspaper, "In fact, Musharraf has worked on building support for the four points across the LOC and even internationally. PDP less and the National Conference more, supported the points. Omar Abdullah met General Musharraf in 2006 and earlier in London in 2005. Abdullah saw wisdom in breaking the political logjam on J&K and supported the initiative."

With all said there is no clarity in Pakistan's Kashmir Policy. The contradictory statements emanating from different power centers have made it confusion worst confounded. It is in this bizarre political situation that the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (M) has decided to visit Pakistan and have dialogue with its leadership. It may not be appropriate to comment on political sagacity and wisdom of this decision. It may be construed as encroaching upon the policy matters of the organization to suggest to the conglomerate to defer the visit till the dust raised after the elections continue to cloud the political scene in that country. It needs not be taken as didactic; the ripe time for Kashmir leadership is to have intra-specific dialogue for arriving at a consensus rather than having dialogue at other levels.

Story of Campuses and Professo

It may not be a good experience to read a musty smelling book cover with dust. Yes, it is not only nauseating but also inviting allergies read books that have not been touched for years together. It so h pened with me. I spotted an old book in my library; the book has b lying in the bookshelf as good as dead for about past two decades.

It were some news reports that had stirred my mind and made m to think about the academia, it were many ideas lurking in mind abo my own alma mater that brought me near to this book and made me t pick it up, dust it off and browse through badly smelling yellowish pag My teacher Dr. M.S. Want used to call my alma mater as a goody goo primary school, perhaps he used this epithet for the University for not having academically bloomed fully those days but with all cynicis of my teacher then it was cascading with real scholarship. It was u imaginable to think of scholarship for peanuts or scholarship with pr tags and scholarship with intrigues. Less the said better, well....

It was perhaps the title of the book that attracted my attention- a prompted me to read it once again after about two decades. The bo has a beautiful title, Cloak and Gown, Scholars in America's Sec War. It has been published in the year 1978 by a British Publisher Coll Harvell , London. The author of the book is Robin W Winks, a for member of the US diplomatic service and a professor at the Yale U versity in the United States. The book spreading over 607 pages co tains seven chapters and has profuse notes. Title of every chapter a cursory look tells a tale, first chapter, the University: Recruiting Grou second chapter Campus, third chapter, Library, fourth chapter, The A lete, fifth chapter, the Professor, sixth Chapter, the Theorist and se enth Chapter, The Alumni. The book as the very titles of the chapt indicate is about the Universities and the American Intelligence Ag

cies in war and diplomacy. The book is a result of many years research and interviews with about two hundred former OSS and CIA staff.

It is always a different experience re-reading a book in changed perspective after a couple of decades. Even reading text books after having passed through many springs and summers reading them in the autumn of life makes a difference. It is reading a different Shakespeare at ripe age than at one read at the tender school age, King Lear reveals it self differently at ripe age than during teenybopper times. Reading Robin Winks book, though not written in a very lucid style, after two decades made a different reading- it was reading against a backdrop.

The author of the book himself is worried about classification of his massive work, "And so what is curate's egg, this book the reader holds in his hand? It is a history of peculiar kind. Most likely librarians, charged with order and symmetry, will classify it as intelligence history, though I would soon see it on shelves with Langlois and Seignbois, authors classic (though fundamentally boring) treatise on historical methods. I do not know how the book has been classified by the librarians in the United States but it is good study that provides deeper insight into how various intelligence agencies used Universities as recruiting grounds and covers for espionage activities. The book while profiling some leading Intelligence officers also narrates stories how from Second World War onwards the Universities supplied the analysis for conducting field operations.

The first chapter of the book has been titled as The University Recruiting Ground; in this chapter while defining University as a community, being of the world distinctly not in it, with all symbols and trappings normally associated with the emotions of the nationalism, he dwells in detail how the Yale University became a recruiting ground for the intelligence agencies. It also tells how the Yale University adjusted their research to assist in the work of intelligence. It also tells us how various institutes in the University during the war were geared to work out, how the world might be recognized to fit American needs. The book details about various scholars engaged in studies that were used as inputs by the intelligence agencies. The focus of this chapter is how various scholars worked in tandem with CIA and various out fits of Office of Strategic Services (OSS), such as R&A, Research and Analy-

sis, SI, Secret Intelligence, SO, Special Operation, X-2, Counter Intel
gence, MO, Morale Operation, OG, Operation Groups, MU, Marit
Unit and FN, Foreign Nationalities. The book also tells about how v
ous branches read and processed information going through eth
press. The Institute of Human Relation of his university as the n
source of intelligence information and how boys from this univer
had been sent to China as missionaries for setting up hospitals, sch
and teaching English for picking up intelligence. The chapter giv
vivid picture of studies carried out by university scholars about cul
of various regions and its utilization as an input for carrying out po
cal operations in these countries. Scholars from various universities w
engaged to change cultural, social and political discourses in other co
tries. The book presents kaleidoscopic view about how academia "
involved by various agencies in the United States for pursuing its g
in various countries around the globe during wars and after the w
The author writes that for the contribution made by academia to in
ligence, gathering through research and analysis, that core of inte
gence, the Research and Analysis branch, soon came to be known
Campus. In the last chapter, the book tells about how and why acade
distanced itself from CIA. Calling CIA shooting itself in foot, the aut
writes, "Can present a dozen arguments why academia and the int
gence community had by late 1960's in much of country, by mid-19
in nearly all, put much a distance between themselves. Both were
sponsible, certainly academics generally wanted nothing to do wh
perceived as an unethical subgovernment. The academia had star
believing that it was not faulty intelligence but political judgment t
was producing disaster, and many believed that throwing more resea
at problem would not solve the problem It was not only in the c
puses in the United States that the academia was involved in resea
about cultures, ethics, faiths in other countries but wherever the Un
States was in war, it hired people from the campuses for changing
litical and cultural discourses in those countries. The book talks a
about cross-cultural studies in various universities. The great treas
of the book is its vast and elaborate references and long list of biblio
raphy. The bibliography that spreads over fifty pages gives details ab
the primary and secondary sources consulted by the author in writi

book.
Lamentation won't do. It is no answer. There has been lots of pound-
of chests over the vision document published by Kashmir Univer-
y at the time of renaming Kashmir Centre as the Institute of Kashmir
dies. Some bright writers for this Paper have analyzed this "vision
ument" in detail and denounced it as fraud that is being perpetu-
d against Kashmir culture. Some saw it as an attempt to change po-
cal discourse of Kashmir, some saw it as a part of ideological war-
re to design and develop and popularize a selective narrative of the
story so as to alter intellectual landscape of the valley. The document
on the face of it seems drafted by some one with biased understanding
of Kashmir history, including even Hindu and Buddhist periods. I may
not venture into domain of historians and point out historical inaccu-
racies and distortion in this document. I am even going to use a blue
pencil for making the document honest to Hindu or Buddhist period.

The document adopted as bible by the Institute of Kashmir Studies
was not born on the spur of movement, it is on the contrary, the culmi-
nation of a movement that has been in progress for long to change the
cultural, social and political discourse. It was initially going on behind
the scene through some Non Governmental Organizations (NGO's), that
used to hold seminars in closed rooms and invited a selected gathering
of poets and writers who write on anything against a price. It became a
public debate after some NGO invited a Bohara "intellectual," Asgar
Ali, an Engineer from Mumbai to hold a three days seminar in Srinagar.
It were his remarks, about the spread of Islam in Kashmir, particularly
the remark that all Kashmiri Muslims were "shudaras," who under
social and economic compulsions converted to Islam that created the
row. He in a way compared Sheikh-ul-Alam's understanding of reli-
gious tolerance to Akbar's doctrine of Din-e-Allahia. His remarks about
religious syncretism invited harsh reaction from all speakers. It was
here that the newly state-coined word ,Kashmiryat, was denounced as
colonial discourse. The remarks made by Mumbai Bohara writer re-
mained under discussion in newspapers. Who coined word ,Kashmiryat
and how it found a place in the State's political discourse continues to
be a matter of debate. Etymologically the word is not a part of Kashmiri
lex. It does not figure in any major or minor Kashmiri poetry from Lal

Ded to Amin Kamil. The word ,Kashrut was perhaps first o
Rehman Rahi when he wrote an anthem for Kashmir la
"Kashrutuk wahid nishan Kashir Zaban, Kashir zaban. It was
picked up from here by some intellectuals who gathered und
Kashmir Forum and converted it into- Kashmiryat. The for
born to provide ideological props to National Conference to figh
what was seen in 1984 as New Delhi's onslaught against Kashm
tity. The word Kashmiryat was basically born as a manifest
Kashmiri sub-nationalism. Many had seen it, at the time of it
that it would serve as guiding star to the ideology behind inde
state of Jammu and Kashmir. It may be a matter of research a
the word was picked up by the State to change the political disc
the state, but it goes with out saying that it has been a section o
mir intelligentsia that has not only been supporting the State in
ing the cultural and political discourse and creating its own n
but endeavoring to corrupt social milieu and religious ethos. Som
back Kashmir University got an anthem written for itself by a
versifier. It was put to music and adopted in 2007. One may app
the music and the production of EMMRC for its quality but it b
seems to be the part of now known political agenda of some p
the top, in the State. The anthem starts hailing Mother Kasheer
being fountain head of knowledge. It hails all Hindu Sanskirit s
of yore, Kamendara, Bilhana, Kalhana and Abihnev Gupta. It m
Lal Ded and Sheikh-ul- Alam, but it does not mention the great M
saints and scholars of Kashmir who enriched the literary lands
Kashmir. It does not mention Sheikh Yaqoob Sarafi, Baba Dawo
and thousands great literary giants that dominated literary s
Kashmir from fourteenth century. It makes no mention of great Ka
poets who played pivotal role in bringing social and political con
ness amongst Kashmiri at the threshold of the twentieth century
not mention Abdul Ahad Azad or Ghulam Ahmed Mehjoor. Ther
mention of Maulvi Rasool Shah, known for his contributions to e
tion in Kashmir, particularly its spread amongst Muslims of Ka
as Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. There is no mention of the greatest beno
of Kashmir and founder of modern Kashmir, Mir Syed Ali Hamad
the anthem adopted by the Kashmir University. It is not that the

not conscious of the fact that the modern Kashmir owes its cul-
nd economy to this great scholar who wrote scores of books on
, society and polity. This gross negligence evinces the fact that
thor has betrayed Kashmir history for, perhaps, making some
s. It is not only the Muslim period the anthem is biased about
ffers from prejudice against the Buddhist period too. There is not
on of a single Buddhist scholar in the anthem adopted by the Kash-
niversity.

rue, as some writer has written in this paper, the Institute of Kash-
tudies has neither the capability nor capacity to do genuine re-
h on Kashmir but has been created to change the historical nar-
and corrupt the state's own political discourses.

When one looks at discourses over "Kashmiryat", the University
m and the vision document, they look as horrifying reminders of
924 days when after Khilfat movement the Hindu revivalist move-
such as the Mahasabha and Arya Samaj launched aggressive cam-
against Muslims. It targeted their faith and culture. The vision
ment adopted as gospel for the IKS by the University looks a docu-
of reconversion in tune with the Shuddi campaign that was initi-
by Swami Shradnanad. I need not remind, it was this movement
not only provided strength to the Muslim League doctrine of two
n theory but also resulted in a book, like Jihad in Islam, by Mawdudi
929.

Lamenting on changing political discourse won't do, it needs
lar's genuine pro-active participation to disorient the new narra-
One may not accept any reaction from "pro-freedom" leadership,
is bogged down under its own contradictions, but it is not only a
llenge for regional political parties but also a litmus test to their
mmitment to true Kashmir ethos and culture.

Story of Stalem
Leaders Have an Opportunity to Rediscov

It will be a year of stalemate on Kashmir. This is how many po
observers look at 2008. Six months of the year have already b
history and during the next six months there seems no prospect
headway. The statements of political observers may seem hyperb
some of our leaders, but there is need to analyse these statemen
find out if there is rationale behind them.

Many arguments are advanced in support of the continua
impasse on Kashmir during the remaining 2008 and it's spilling
2009. The issue, some years back, had caused lot of concern
international community and was a nuclear flash point in south
The factors behind its perpetuation are manifold. One, the po
uncertainty in Pakistan, two, elections in the state, three, parlia
elections in India and fourth, elections in the United States.

Some of the observers have also been attributing the defeatis
tude, in a section of "pro-freedom" Kashmir leadership, as a cont
tory factor for the continuance of the impasse on this important So
Asian problem. Before analyzing how the defeatist attitude in a se
of senior Kashmir leadership was contributing to the stalemate,
like to examine some other factors. I may not try to analyze ho
issue, that some years back was under sharp focus at the interna
level, is slowly getting relegated into oblivion for the lack of visi
our leadership. Though I many a times in the past saw chronic in
tude in our leadership, which many have been trying to memori
contribution, as cause of the perpetuation of Kashmir sufferings.
not debate here how ineptitude of leaders from Sheikh Muhan
Abdullah down to contemporary "philosopher" leaders have put
mium after premium on the impasse on this issue.

2007, we were made to believe that the resolution of the sixty
old Kashmir problem was round the corner. President Pervez
arraf in his 24 April, 2007 address to Foreign Affairs Committee
anish Congress in Madrid stated that the world may see the reso-
of Kashmir dispute earlier than expected." A reasonable progress
is account had already been achieved; military option was not the
er to the problem. Perhaps taking a cue from his President the
Pakistan foreign minister, Khurshid Ahmed Kasuri publicly an-
ced that the agreement on this issue, that caused three wars and
s of battles between the two countries, had been finalized and it
ow just to be signed. Though the statement of Pakistan Foreign
ister at that time seemed a figment of imagination but when this
ment is seen in perspective of the statement made early this year
senior Indian bureaucrat, it seems that some substantial headway
been made behind the scene between India and Pakistan. A very
or journalist from New Delhi who was privy to progress, on behind
cene dialogue on Kashmir, a few days back corroborated the state-
nts made by Pakistan leaders that a solution of Kashmir problem
ld have been reached in 2007 if situation in Pakistan would not
got embroiled in the mess, created after sacking of Chief Justice of
tan. One may or may not share journalists point of view in its
ity that, had not Pakistan President committed one after another
pas, the Kashmir dispute would have been by now a history. It may
inue to be a matter of debate as to what kind of agreement would
been reached by the two countries and if it would have been in
with the sentiment of majority of people in the state. But there can
o denying that some progress towards the resolution of Kashmir
blem would have been made during 2007, had not the political
nts taken it over.

Why people observers have propounded theory of stalemates: The
es that had been generated about political stability in Pakistan after
ceful elections proved short lived. The way developments have been
g place in that country, it seems that it's in for yet another chaotic
tion that may warrant yet another spell of army rule. On the face
, it seems that the former Chief Justice of Pakistan is nursing a
tical ambition and perhaps looks forward for dislodging President

Pervez Mascara. Muslim League (N) leadership is also up in arms w massive vendetta. Though India and Pakistan Foreign Ministers scheduled to meet in New Delhi, with uncertainty looming lar Pakistan, yet there seems no hope for a very serious dialogue on K mir at least during 2008.

While India and Pakistan talked during 2007, there were e both by New Delhi and Islamabad for engaging Kashmir leaders intra-dialogue. The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (M) visited stan. It had number of meetings with Pakistan leaders. It also had meetings with Indian leaders including Prime Minister, Manmoh Singh. I may not comment on meetings with Pakistan leaders but a as meeting with Prime Minister of India is concerned, it failed to g beyond a photo opportunity. It was after this meeting only that N Delhi dragged its feet and asked the APHC to join the round table conference along with other pro-India leaders of the state. This clearly suggested that India recognized the conglomerate like any other pro-Indi political party in the state and was not serious in talking to them abou Kashmir problem.

The APHC(M) leaders, since their last/lost meeting with Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh have been pleading for providing them yet another opportunity for reinitiating a dialogue. It seems that, in view of the coming Assembly elections, New Delhi will not be interested in dissuading the public mind away from the elections by renewing meetings with APHC (M) but it may provide them an opportunity to discuss the role of conglomerate during the coming elections. As the mood is indicative in the APHC (M), much before New Delhi officially asks it to desist from boycott call for elections, already given by APHC (G) and supported UJC, it has decided to remain away from the boycott call. It may be too early to say if APHC (M) sits on the fence in the coming state Assembly elections or indirectly supports one or the other party at the hustings.

The stalemate theory on Kashmir finds a strong support in going for Parliament election either towards end of 2008 or in the beginning of 2009. In this critical year, when BJP has already been scoring one after another point over the Congress it seems beyond imagination that the Congress led government would be taking any bold initiatives for

ding stalemate on Kashmir.

The year 2008 is also an election year in the United States. No one deny the fact that the results of these elections will have a bearing the Sub-Continent politics and Kashmir also cannot escape its impact. Many a Kashmir leaders who not only pleaded but also brought of flexibility in the wake of post 9/11 belligerent US policy have started waiting for Barack Hussein Obama to occupy the White use.

In this bizarre scenario of stalemates, the leadership needs to ponover as what should be its role. The stalemate also has a silver lining it; it provides an opportunity to Kashmir leaders to readdress the ues confronting the state as raked up by the state itself.

Obama Intervent

Who will be India's next PM? It is difficult question to answer. Even
best pollsters have not so far ventured the courage of making any p
dictions. The tug of war this time is not between the UPA and NDA o
but there are ostensibly more players. Of the players mentioned so
see BSP party leader Mayawati as a formidable candidate for the
slot. Going by the count of leaders the UPA has inflated its ranks, it
the troika of Mulyam Singh, Lalu Prasad and Ram Vilas who notwi
standing their differences have joined hands to prevent formation
NDA or Mayawati led government. The UPA has also become top hea
after some prominent leaders including Farooq Abdullah, Mam
Banerjee, Naveen Patnak, Jayalalithaa and George Fernandez, pre
ously in the NDA, joining it. It may be a matter of debate for politi
observers in New Delhi, if these heavy-weights would tilt balance
favor of the UPA or the NDA, or third front along with smaller regio
parties by forging an alliance, but there seem no takers for it in Jamm
and Kashmir.

The debate who becomes next Prime Minister is not of much
interest to majority of people in the state. Man in street is not bother
whether it is the caste factor or the religious card or the promises
prosperity that tilts the power balance in New Delhi but what concer
him is that India should get a Prime Minister who can end sixty yea
old political uncertainty in the region by resolving the Kashmir d
pute.

It is a historical reality that unlike in Pakistan Kashmir proble
has never had centrality in any of the elections held in India duri
past sixty years. True, during the Nehruian era Kashmir was the dom
nant issue that determined India's foreign policy but it would be wro
to believe that it had any impact on domestic politics. The right wi

political parties tried to rake up issues like abrogation of special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir but failed to make a political for- out of it. It, in fact, has been caste, religion and to an extent eco- nomic factor that have played key role at the hustings. But despite Kash- mir, not being a major factor in any of the elections, most of the politi- cal parties have been looking at it as tinder box that needs not be touched during the elections. It has been this fear that has worked as determi- nant for New Delhi policy of procrastination towards Kashmir. Seen in right perspective the policy of procrastination has not only illuded per- manent peace in the region but has also worked against the interests of common people in the sub-continent. It has been this policy that has caused three wars in the past, consumed resources of the two countries for building arsenals, contributed to extremism and taken a toll of de- velopment of common people. It was the NDA government led by Vajpayee that realized, that in the changed global scenario in a uni- polar world, the doctrine of procrastination as a tool of diplomacy had outlived its utility and, therefore, took a bold initiative of starting a composite dialogue with Pakistan for the resolution of all outstanding disputes including Kashmir. It, in fact, was the NDA government that demolished the myth that Kashmir was a sacred cow that could not be talked about. In May, 2004, when Prime Minister Vajpayee passed on baton to Manmohan Singh, he handed over a very positive note on India-Pakistan relations to him that held the promise of resolving the vexed Kashmir problem. There can be no denying that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh carried forwards the peace process and in April 2005, a landmark took place between him and Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf. The meeting was departure from the past. There was no rigid stand on both the sides over the resolution of Kashmir. Manmohan Singh standing next to Musharraf said, "Conscious of the historic opportunity created by the improved relations and the over- whelming desire of the peoples of the two countries for durable peace...determined that the peace process was now irreversible". The two leaders also vowed that "Terrorism would not be allowed to derail peace efforts."

Bidding adieu to the policy of belligerency and adopting a more pragmatic approach on Kashmir instilled hope in all those interested in

seeing peace and atmosphere of friendship in the Sub-continent. An... lysts reflected that "the focus on building trust, softening the borde... and improving the standard of an ordinary Kashmiri was a major shi... from the past and, they hoped, it would ultimately lead to the resolu... tion of Kashmir dispute to the aspiration of the majority of people in... the state." The composite dialogue, more particularly, the track two dia... logues on Kashmir were moving in the right direction. If Pakistan... former Foreign Minister, Khurshid Kasuri and Advisor to Prime Minis... ter, Manmohan Singh, Mr. Naranyan are to be believed, an agreement... that could pave way for final settlement had been arrived at. In the... words of James Traub of New York Times commented that In March... 2007, General Musharraf made the colossal miscalculation when he... insisted that Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry, whose activism on the... bench had threatened the military's invulnerability to legal prosecu... tion, should step down." Things in the sub- continent would, other... wise, have been different. With all skepticisms about his four point for... mula, it was his charisma that kindled hope of a major breakthrough... on Kashmir. Retracing its steps, in the wake of 26/11 happenings,... from the composite dialogue, that had been described irreversible, raises... doubts about the prudence of New-Delhi.This approach in all likeli... hood is going to pave way for mediation by the United States.

Improved relations between India and Pakistan can play an im... portant role in the United States policy of regional approach and the... resolution of Afghanistan crises, besides containing the Taliban influ... ence. The US President Barrak Obama in his recent statement asked... India and Pakistan to initiate effective dialogue. While New Delhi... dragged its feet from reinitiating composite dialogue, Pakistan welcomed... the suggestion and its foreign office spokesperson said, "Pakistan has... consistently maintained that instead of indulging in a blame-game, both... sides should, without further delay, resume the Composite Dialogue... process. We also need to address the long-standing issue of Jammu and... Kashmir, which is the core dispute that has bedeviled relations and vi... tiated the security environment in South Asia." Is withdrawal from the... peace process a right approach, is an important question and will this... approach not invite direct intervention from President Obama in the... regions politics?

Despite suffering for the past 52 days by the economic crisis, he... his made some "striking moves" on foreign policy. It also needs to be... understood that success to his foreign policy passes through the sub... continent. In the emerging global scenario and the United States in... creased influence in the region, it needs to be understood that the four... years peace process between the two countries has undoubtedly pro... vided warp and woof for weaving a solution of the Kashmir problem.... There is need to carry forward this peace process. In fact, it should... become an important pillar of India's national policy. And whosoever... comes to power follows the dotted line to see peace returning to South... Asia on permanent basis.

Cairo Speech and Kashmir

I was waiting for Barak Obama Cairo speech. So were millions across the globe. In his speech he sought to define relations between the United States and the Muslim World. He has been making his intentions clear throughout all these months that he wanted to end the cycle of suspicion and mistrust between the United States and the Muslims.

It was a great delight to listen to his speech. It was a narrative of Islamic history. It was a discourse on relations between Muslims, Christens and Jews. He talked about three great faiths that have shaped the world through centuries. In the words of Robert Fisk, "He was a Preacher, historian, economist, moralist, schoolteacher, critic, warrior, emperor. Sometimes you even forgot Barack Obama was the president of the United States of America." He set tone of respect from the beginning when he started his speech with the Islamic way of salutation "Assalam-u- Aleikum," trigging applause from the crowd in the hall of century's old Cairo University. He addressed Muslim sensibilities and reminded the Muslims of their great and magnificent past and of their immense contribution to the history of mankind, a chapter that most of the Muslim leaders have forgotten.

Every word of his 6053 words was measured and pregnant with message for the Muslim World. Many described his speech as clever and started reading a lot in his long speech. One columnist compared him to Gettysburg and yet another looked in his speech Churchill's wisdom.

Scores of columns have been written during past three days about his speech. The political analysts, subject specialist and political leaders have been looking for the impact and implications of his speech. The political analysts have counted "buts" in his speech, they have counted the number of "applauses" that he triggered from the selected audi-

ence. The Middle East experts have been analyzing every word of his speech. He talked almost about all important issues concerning the Muslim World, Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, women's rights in some Muslim countries and problems confronting the Muslim world. He very subtly talked about the status of democracy in some Muslim countries, but Kashmir was significantly missing in his speech.

To those who have been tracking Barrack Obama since the day he started campaigning for the highest office, missing of Kashmir in his speech, ostensibly, seems to be a departure. A former Pakistan Ambassador to United States and United Kingdom Maleeh Lodhi has seen missing of Kashmir in his speech as a "significant omission." So has a former Pakistan Journalist and Chairman Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, Mushahid Hussein called it. There has not been much of jubilation in New Delhi over "Kashmir" missing from the Cairo speech. Barrak Obama, during his compaign, had often described Kashmir problem as a serious conflict that deserved resolution. If one takes Sunday Column of M. J. Akbar, in the Times of India, (June 7, 2009), as pulse in New Delhi, the worry about Obama's concern over Kashmir seems seething corridors of power in Indian capital. Akbar writes, "A turbulent whisper is surging through Washington. Barack Obama wants peace in the life of his first term. He has discovered the magic potion that will kill the roots of two poisonous plants, Palestine and Kashmir. He has told Israel that he wants a definite route map towards an independent Palestine state by July. July is also the month during which Hillary Clinton is scheduled to visit the Indian subcontinent. In her baggage will be a war manual for Af-Pak and a peace prescription for Ind-PaK."

Kashmir was recognized as key word in Obama policy on South-Asia during his election campaign. In their joint article titled "From Great Gamble to Grand Bargain- Ending Chaos in Afghanistan and Pakistan, Published in Foreign Affairs November –December 2008, Barnett R. Rubbin and Ahmed Rashid saw path to peace in South-Asia through Kashmir. The K-word in fact had become synonymous for Peace in Afghanistan-India-Pakistan for the Obama policy in the region. The 2nd November 2008 statement made by the then US presidential front-runner Barack Obama that the United States should try to resolve the Kashmir dispute, while backing American efforts to promote a better under-

standing between India and Pakistan, was welcomed by Kashmir lea... ers. In his interview with MSNBC, Barack Obama had said that US sho... probably try to facilitate a better understanding between Pakistan a... India and try to resolve the Kashmir crisis so that they can stay focu... not on India, but on the situation with those militants," In another i... terview on Sept 25, Mr Obama said that if elected for the post of t... president, he would "continue support of ongoing Indian Pakistani ... forts to resolve Kashmir problem ... to address the political roots of t... arms race between India and Pakistan." The remarks of Obama stirr... hopes that he would be playing a pro-active role for the resolution ... Kashmir and ending strains in the relation of two key South Asian pl... ers, India and Pakistan. The statement generated optimism and ho... about ending of political uncertainty in Kashmir. In its editorial a new... paper commented, "The long unresolved issue of Kashmir betwe... Islamabad and New Delhi, got a stirring on the global map once ag... after US presidential front-runner Barack Obama drew world atte... tion at the fag end of his campaign to reach the White House wh... during an interview, he emphatically stressed the need for the Uni... States to try afresh to resolve the valley dispute for a lasting global pe... and to secure America from a potential threat from Muslim militan... Obama's observation that the Kashmir conflict leads to promote mi... tancy among the Muslims of South Asia, and this development usua... works against the US, clearly manifests that he wants peace in our ... gion to ensure that by having so, the US would also feel secure. He see... quite determined to carry out his plan."

There can be no denying that New Delhi did a successful lobby... in getting Kashmir deleted from the brief of Richard Holbrook, the ... voy for Pakistan and Afghanistan. It is a different story that the US ... voy to the region did talk about Kashmir during his visit to New Del... and observers in New Delhi commented that Kashmir continues to ... the brief for the envoy. The question arises can omission of Kashm... from Barrack Obama in Cairo also be seen as success of Indian lobb... ing and failure of Pakistan Foreign office.

It would be too naïve to look at the omission of Kashmir from ... speech as a paradigm shift in US policy towards this issue that conti... ues to be a nuclear flashpoint in the region. It continues to be cause ...

...arms race between the hostile neighbors. If the story published in the ...Washington Post just a day back is to be believed that the two countries ...re engaged in producing nuclear head carriers, it should be cause of ...concern in Washington.

Seen in right perspective the Cairo speech was targeted at Middle ...East audience. As very aptly observed by an American South Asia ex... ...pert, "Well, the speech itself was directed at the Arab Muslim, I would ...say for the most part. That's why he spoke so much about Israel and ...Palestine. A majority of the problem, from the security point of view, ...whether it is the Middle East or al Qaeda, is more with the Arab and not ...the South Asian. The main point is that his audience was Arab. Speak... ...ing to them about South Asia or the plight of South Asian Muslim would ...not resonate. They would'nt pay attention. Their attention is focused on ...Israel and issues within the region. So, for him, to speak about India, ...Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kashmir, the Taliban, etc., his audience would ...lose interest. He mentioned Afghanistan, but only with regards to the ...reasoning of why the US Military was there, which was 9/11. The per... ...petrators were Arabs, which is a significant point to be made. The ma... ...jority of militants in Afghanistan and Pakistan are not South Asians. ...They are either from the Caucus States or they are Arabs. It's a fact that ...is well known. It doesn't mean that what is going on in South Asia, or ...the plight of the South Asian Muslims, isn't important. But it's not his ...audience."

I don't read much in his omission of Kashmir. The United States in ...its history has never looked at the issues confronting South Asia as Is... ...sues concerning the Muslim World. It is a separate entity and a differ... ...ent subject for them. Historically, the United States never looked at Pa... ...kistan or for that matter Bangladesh as part of the Muslim World but as ...important players in South Asia.

I don't agree with M.J. Akbar, what he has written in his Sunday ...piece about Kashmir dispute, but I have no reason to disagree with him ...that US will be focusing on Kashmir in the coming months.

Kashmir on US Centre

Can Obama Administration Push through Kashmir Resolution?

It is a dominant question. I think, it would be more appropr
say that since Barak Obama took over, the overriding discourse
dia, Pakistan and the United States has been if the new US admin
tion to all intents and purposes wants to push through the resolu
Kashmir problem. The discussion over the United States playing
in the resolution of Kashmir dispute received another fillip on
day (June 25-2009) when Pakistan Prime Minister, Yousuf Raza
in his meeting with US National Security Adviser General, James
called upon the world at large and the US in particular to play
role for the resolution of the "core issue of Kashmir" as well
water issue between Pakistan and India. It would help, he said, Islam
focus on fighting extremism and terrorism on its western bor
ensure peace and stability in South Asia. Looking through the
ment of Pakistan Prime Minister, it is more or less a reflection
ideas expressed by the US president Barak Obama during his ele
campaign and also after getting elected. Many other US South
experts also made the same statements.

There has been a lot of talk about the idea of regional approac
resolution of the Kashmir problem after an article, "From Great
to Grand Bargain Ending Chaos in Afghanistan and Pakistan, w
jointly by Barnett R Rubin and Ahmed Rashid and published in the
vember-December issue of the Foreign Affairs. The article summe
"The crisis in Afghanistan and Pakistan is beyond the point where
troops will help. U.S. strategy must be to seek compromise with in
gents while addressing regional rivalries and insecurities." There
been a lot of debate in the sub-continent and at the international
after the publication of this article. It has raised a genuine ques

path to enduring peace in South Asia passes through Kashmir
Before looking into the question if the Obama administration
lly serious about pushing through resolution of Kashmir, there
for understanding as to how the United States has been looking
mir. There is also need to know the history of its role in resolv-
s problem.

phen Cohen in his book India- Emerging Power (Washington
ng Institution Press) has beautifully encapsulated it in these words:
mir is both cause and consequences of the India-Pakistan Co-
rum. It is primarily a dispute about justice and people, although
ritorial dimensions are complicated enough. Like many intrac-
problems, it is hard to tell where domestic politics ends and for-
olicy begins, and dispute has firmly wedged in the internal poli-
both the countries".

istorically the United States has been involved with Kashmir dis-
rom the day it was born. The United National Security Council
tion adopted on 21 April 1948 that gave right to self-determina-
the people of Jammu and kashmir was co-sponsored by the United
The United State involvement in the Kashmir conflict was far
r during the cold war. The United States as very aptly said by a
uth Asia expert like India and Pakistan has remained in some re-
a hostage to Kashmir problem. This problem could be neglected,
ps, but it could not be avoided. Though America's interests in
mir could not be doubted but its stakes in the conflict were not
ient enough for it to mount a major and sustained attempt aimed
lement of it. There are opinions that suggest that the conflict over
mir between India and Pakistan perpetuated because of the cold
nd many experts have seen it as a baby, born out of womb of cold
nly.

he US interest in the Kashmir conflict started receding after the
India and China war, but it got diluted further after the end of
old war. It no more saw favored US supervised plebiscite but started
ng at the Simla Agreement as the best framework for the resolu-
of Kashmir problem. In 1972, both India and Pakistan agreed at
a to resolve Kashmir dispute bilaterally. The period saw
ington's leanings towards New Delhi and a basic shift in its Kash-

mir policy. This change in US policy on Kashmir that was seen ... Pakistan centric" caused lot of rejoicing in New Delhi.

The United States interests in Kashmir got renewed after the Cl... Administration took over. The perceptions of the United States ... Kashmir were explained by Assistant Secretary of State for South... Ms. Robin Lynn Raphel, when during her visit to New Delhi in O... 1993 She said, "The United States government views Kashmir ... puted territory and that means we don't recognize the Instrum... Accession and therefore not an integral part of India." Robin Ra... phrasing was consistent with Washington's formal position on ... mir. The Clinton Administration reiterated this stand with same ... sity but preferred to use milder phraseology. True, after the end o... cold war the United States did not insist for implementation of th... Security council Resolutions on Kashmir but favored resolution ... dispute through bilateral negotiations but it did not mean that the ... scite had lost its relevance for them. It continued its political ... tance as it provided the hinge to the Kashmir problem. As very ... put by Prof. Robert G Wirsing, "The Plebiscite option, we need to ... derstand, remains an important factor in the Kashmir dispute, no... ter how slender chances of it being activated."

Kashmir continued to be on the agenda of the Clinton Admini... tion as nuclear flashpoint in South Asian region that demands re... tion for global peace. Its importance diminished after 9/11, but it w... be wrong to say that it was taken off the US agenda. Kashmir conti... on the agenda of the Bush Administration. President George Bus... only asked India and Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir dispute thr... peaceful dialogue but rather insisted on inclusion of Kashmir in ... dialogue. In his interview on February, 2006 to some Indian journ... in Washington, he made it clear that he wanted Kashmiri citize... the dialogue between India and Pakistan. Talking to Indian journ... he said: "I do want to make something clear in the speech I gave ... (to Asia Society). I said that as to the Kashmir interest issue, Am... supports a solution that is acceptable to all sides. As you might rec... my remarks, I said, "to both sides." I would like the record to be so... the world hears me say, "All sides." I fully understand that the de... to be acceptable to the Indians, Pakistanis, as well as the citize...

...shmir. Okay?"

Seen in right historical perspective,United States Policy towards ...shmir problem, despite suffering from troughs and crests, has been ...sistent. The perceptions of the Obama administration towards Kash... ...r are not much different than its predecessors in office but it has ...opted different approach. It sees Kashmir problem connected with ...toring peace and stability not only in Afghanistan and Pakistan but ...whole of South Asia. Mr. Obama on a couple of occasions argued that ...Pakistan will not fully commit to fighting the insurgency it shares with ...Afghanistan until "it sheds historic insecurities toward India. Talks about ...Kashmir, the central point of contention between the two nuclear ri... ...vals, are among the "critical tasks for the next administration," It is ...true that Barak Obama did not appoint a special envoy for Kashmir as ...he had announced and did not include Kashmir in the brief of Richard ...Holbrooke US special envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. However, ...there have been reports and indications about Holbrooke having en... ...gaged India in conversation on Kashmir and having also succeeded in ...setting thaw in the halted dialogue between the two countries. The United ...States nudging is seen behind meeting between Prime Minister, ...Manmohan Singh and President Asif Ali Zardari in a Russian city and ...Foreign Ministers meeting during the G-8 Conference in Italy on 27 ...June 2009.

The past four to five months developments suggest that Kashmir is ...slowly once again taking centre stage in the United States policy. On 6 ...April 2006, one of the premier US think tanks that was set up last year ...with Richard Holbrooke and General James, before they took official ...assignments, called on the Obama administration to find the lasting ...settlement to Kashmir dispute and encourage behind the scenes efforts ...to deescalate tensions between India and Pakistan over the issue. In its ...fifty page report , " A Strategy for Stablizing Afghanistan and Pakistan," ...it emphasized the importance of resolution of Kashmir for it having ...caused wars in the region and tension for past sixty two years.It pro... ...vided the rationale for decades for support of guerrilla and militant ...operations by groups based in Pakistan. These forces have now escaped ...the control of the state apparatus that initialy established and protected ...them".

The opinion about imperativeness of Kashmir resolution for [illegible] in the region is gaining momentum. The United Nations Associatio[illegible] United States in June only, adopted a resolution in support of Kas[illegible] solution. Given to the opinion gaining strength in Washington an[illegible] proach of the Obama administration towards conflicts, there are [illegible] cations that the US will be playing an important role in coming mo[illegible] for pushing through an amicable and peaceful resolution of Kas[illegible] problem.

Between Agreements and Disagreements

No disclaimers. No disavowals of one's own thoughts and Ideas. It was a day of freedom of expression. That is how I look at the one day seminar organized by the GK Foundation in Hotel Grand Mumtaz past Sunday. Holding a seminar on a broad theme like Kashmir: The Way Forward was like an oasis in a desert of despondency. It was perhaps first seminar held in Srinagar on the subject. True, there have been seminars and debates on this subject in New Delhi, Islamabad, Washington and London where international experts of Kashmir affairs deliberated upon this theme but it was for the first time when Kashmir Civil Society made an endeavor to look forward for resolution of their own problem. Holding a seminar that sounds optimistic in depressing situations in the state, stimulates even the fatigued to partake in the deliberations and look forward for ending the stalemates. The seminar was held at a time when on the one side entire Kashmir was drowned in grief over the rape and murder of a school girl who had been admitted to class 11, section A of the New Green Land Educational School on March 2009, less than three months before. The fateful night that took her life and that of her young sister-in-law, dreaming of having a child just after only a few months. In this atmosphere of gloom, India and Pakistan have resumed their halted dialogue for resolution of all disputes including that of Jammu and Kashmir. The hopes, for taking forward the broad agreement reached between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and former President of Pakistan, held promise of finding a lasting solution.

The gruesome happenings in Shopian that were reminiscent of many other such happenings during past two decades was perpetual reminder to the participants in the seminar of the cost, people of the state have been paying for the political uncertainty.

There were all shades of political opinions present in the semi... Some of the participants and panelists believed that the accessio... the state with Indian union was final and irrevocable. Some did bel... that the dispute was not over quality of accession but on the quan... of accession. Some of the speakers believed that a fraud was perp... ated against the people in the name of accession and there was no do... ment like the instrument of accession existing. These participant... support of their point of view quoted many historians and writers, ... recent one being the book of BBC correspondent in India David L... Some of the participants quoting from various source materials in... seminar challenged the Maharaja Hari Singh having signed any do... ment on October 25 or 26 1947. And some did believe that the ab... sion of the state with India was subject to be ratified by will of ... people. There were panelists and participants who did believe that ... people of the state were yet to exercise their right to self- determi... tion. They believed that this was the only way forward.

The genesis of the Kashmir problem was talked about but it ... not the dominant feature of the discussions. Some scholars and writ... talked at length about the internal dimensions but what made their ... sentation different was that instead of indulging in the blame game ... identified the causes within that have been contributing to the ... tending parties procrastinating amicable settlement of the probl... There were presentations on the external and international dimens... of the problem. Seen in right perspective the deliberations were mo... focused on breaking the status quo for ending the uncertainty,the ca... of agony and pain to the people of the state.

In this write up I don't intend to write a critique of every presen... tion made in the seminar that I leave for someone else to do. Tho... many a perceptions emerged that would need a detailed analysis in ... historical perspective of the problem but that would not be possible ... space constraints. I shall be only discussing some of the percepti... without making reference to the person who articulated them.

One of the perceptions was that the issue of the right to self det... mination needed to be revisited in the light of the relevant UN comm... sions records in which a reference to Kashmir was made only once ... the past 60 years. This perception I believe needs to be looked into ...

right historical perspective. How the issue of right to self-detetsmination for people of Jammu and Kashmir became a dominant political discourse not only amongst the main stakeholders to the dispute but at the global level. It was not the United Nations that first talked about right to self –determination for the people of the state. It in fact was the first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who without mixing words very strongly articulated and advocated this right for the people of the state. Making a statement in the Constituent Assembly on November 25, 1947 he said, "We made it clear to them that while we welcomed the accession we did not want any hurried or forced accession and we would rather wait for the people of the people to decide.In order to establish our bona fides, we have suggested that when people are given the chance to decide their future, this should be done under the supervision of an impartial tribunal such as the United Nations organization".(India 's Foreign Policy By Jawaharlal Nehru, Publication Division, MOIB page 446). In its complaint filed before the United Nations Security Council, India made it abundantly clear that it upheld the fundamental right of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to decide their future. Indian representatives in the UN, Gopalaswamy Ayyangar, on 15 January 48 presenting his government case before the Security Council stated "The question ... whether she (Kashmir) should withdraw from her accession to India, and either accede to Pakistan or remain independent with a right to claim admission as a Member of the United Nations , all this we have recognized to be a matter for unfettered decision by the people of Kashmir." It was India's unequivocal support for right to self determination for the people of the state that made the Security Council members work on draft resolution contemplating simultaneous withdrawals of tribesmen and Indian troops, setting up a neutral administration and holding plebiscite under United Nations control." It would be contradicting the historical facts that there was no reference in the United States to this right during past sixty years. It was not during the marathon debates on Kashmir only that this right dominated the floor of the Security Council but it has been guiding principle of all the commissions appointed for resolving the dispute by this organization. It is this right that has provided the basic thread to all the efforts made by various countries for bringing in lasting peace in

South Asia. The India and Pakistan leaders have been meeting on the channels, at various government levels, at ministers and heads of states level and it has been this right that has been providing warp and woof for the discussions.

The another perception that caught my imagination was that there was a stark and serious generational mismatch between the ones who represent and those who are being represented, and also between the ones who speak and those who are spoken for. I believe this perception needs to be relooked in the right perspective of political struggle in the state. Has there really been generational mismatch in Kashmir struggle. Looking at Kashmir struggle in its historical perspective it has always been initiated and led by people in the age group between 25 and 40. In 1931 both the dominant political leadership Sheikh Abdullah and Chowdary Ghulam Abass were in their late twenties and those who joined them were to play the lead role for next forty to fifty years were younger to them by a couple of years. In 1947 when the Dogra rule ended, most of these leaders had just crossed forty. The Plebiscite Front, minus its founding President, was an organization of young people, most of them being in the age group of 25 to 40. Looking at the post 1990 political scenario, it has thrown up a new crop of leadership in the age group of 25 to 40. Looking at political scenario, whether it is in the ruling clan or the opposition, it is a blend of experience and enthusiasm. Seen in the right perspective there is no mismatch between various age groups but in fact they are symbiotic to each other. The perceptions that surfaced during the hot debates in the seminar hall can work as grist to the mill for ending political uncertainty in the

Let us remember, July 13, truthfully.

Kashmir has suffered historians' apartheid. I have been trying to make this point now for couple of years through my columns, at various seminars and in my personnel interaction with most of the contemporary historians. I think I might have broached this subject more than once with some of living historians including Prof. Muhammad Ishaq Khan, Dr. Muhammad Ashraf Wani, Dr. Sheikh Muhammad Iqbal, Dr. Abdul Ahad, Prof. Fida Muhammad Hassnain and some competent teachers in history and other departments of the Kashmir University. I have been strongly advocating for writing an objective history of Kashmir from medieval period to contemporary times. Though there have been some efforts about writing an objective history of our medieval period but what could be seen an acceptable genuine work that could make earlier works by jaundiced historians fail the litmus test is yet to be published. It is a hard reality that most of the scholars outside Kashmir and even researchers from Kashmir continue to depend on these biased works and quote from them, thus perpetuating the distortions and allowing fiction survive.

I have also been trying to make a point that it has not only been for the historians' bias but even for the journalistic apartheid that the simple story of Kashmir has been convoluted and made most devious and intricate. Today when we are observing 78th martyrs day, I am reminded of how this great day of our sacrifices was presented by a section of influential media outside the country of Kashmir, as it was known up to 1947. To illustrate my point let me quote a bit extensively from a chapter on media from my forth coming book, "Kashmir has been a victim of journalistic apartheid for more than a century. What has been behind this apartheid- religion or politics, is the moot point. This policy of discrimination by a section of press outside the state was not born

just with the birth of Kashmir dispute in 1947, when a "misplaced p
triotism" over took majority of journalists in the newly born Indi
domain. It even existed brazenly and blatantly during the peoples mov
ment against the feudal and autocratic Raj in the State in thirties. T
misrule of the Dogra rulers in Kashmir had caused a lot of anguish
the British Press, but it had not drawn flake of criticism in Delhi a
Jalendhar newspapers. In the contemporary history of Kashmir, 19
July 1931 is an important milestone. On this day, the sky was cast wi
dark clouds and there was dust storm,the situation outside Srinagar j
was surly and gloomy, people in thousands had gathered to hear abo
the trial of one Abdul Qadeer who was being tried for sedition insid
the jail. At noon when people were preparing for prayers, police a
rested five people, which made people restive and they raised sloga
against the government and in support of the young man who had fe
days back given vent to peoples sentiments by raising his voice agai
cruel and unjust Dogra rulers. The ruthless Dogra soldiers opened fi
on innocent people killing twenty one of them and injuring scores.
apathetic were the autocratic rulers that it ignored even treatment
the injured. This incident was followed by imposition of Martial La
and a reign of terror. No sooner did this news reach the outside wo
than there was resentment all over the sub-continent. The Lahore pr
particularly Inqalab, Zamindar and papers owned and edited
Kashmiris like Muhammad Din Fauq, raised a forceful voice agains
mayhem. The brutal killing of innocent people had provoked a lot o
criticism against the autocratic rulers in the British press. But iron
cally, the entire Jalendhar press Hind Samachar, Milap, Partap and many
others justified the firing on the innocent and supported the brute ac
tion against humanity. These papers in their editorials and columns
condemned the people's revolt against the autocracy and also castigated
the leadership of the state. These papers totally distorted the news from
Kashmir and carried banner headlines like, "The Revolt of Muslim
Slaves", "Invasion of Hindu State by Muslims" etc. Even some papers
owned by Sikh Organization like "Akali" official organ of Akali Dal
condemned Muslim agitation and supported Maharaja. Not only that
these newspapers distorted facts about Kashmir but even made efforts
to create hurdles for Kashmir supportive Lahore papers. Muhammad

Yusuf Saraf writes, "Hindu press and leadership in the Punjab Succeeded in persuading the British Governor to take action against the daily Inqalab Lahore, which was spearheading the campaign for reforms in Kashmir". It has not been only during the movement for the restoration of rights and battle for the end of autocracy in the state that the Delhi and Jalendhar press has been discriminatory against Kashmir but even later the apartheid continued. It is ironic that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who preferred Congress, Nehru and Gandhi to the Muslim League, Liquate Ali Khan and Mohammad Ali Jinnah also failed to be darling of press in India. He did initially have some votaries in the leftist press but later on they also turned against him and denounced him as American stooge".

Having suffered historians and journalist's apartheid for such a long time, there is need for retelling our story, the true story, yes the whole truth. It is not only the medieval history that needs to be told truthfully but even the whole story of our struggle against the cruelty of the autocratic rulers. It is hard reality that we have been only telling half-truths about our struggle. How many in new generation know the names of the heroes who fought heroic battles on the streets, villages and forests from Srinagar to Mirpur and Muzzafarabad to Jammu. Though there have been some individual researches but they too have told the story in pieces and bits. What could be seen as a whole story is yet to be told. There is hardly a text on Kashmir struggle against autocracy prescribed in our schools and colleges.

I think some four years back,a two day seminar was organized in connection with the commemoration of the martyrs day. literature and media in bringing political awakening Role of media and literature in bringing political awakening:- in first half of the 20th century a resolution in kashmir was adopted for setting up a chair in the name of Muhammad Din Fauq, one of the pioneers of Kashmir struggle, a journalist and a historian.The chair was to be set in the University of Kashmir for conducting an in-depth study in Kashmir struggle during Afghan, Sikh and Dogra rule. More than two dozen eminent historians and writers endorsed the resolution. The matter was taken up with the then Vice Chancellor of Kashmir University. The Vice Chancellor showed total apathy towards the proposal made by intelligentsia and

did not even bother to reply the missive. I called on him- and the m
ing was so disgusting that it continues to live as mental agony with
The first objection that Vice Chancellor raised against setting up of
in the name of Muhammad Din Fauq was that he was buried in La
and how could the institute set a chair in the name of person who
buried in a different country. When I told him that Dr. Al
Muhmmad Iqbal was also buried in Lahore but there were sco
academic institutes, libraries and parks in his name in Kashmir
cannot we have a chair in the name of a person whose contrib
towards our struggle was hailed by Allama himself. He talked abo
faith and the discussion ended on a discouraging note that the
governor will not approve a chair in the name of someone who i
buried in Kashmir. It may be genuinely difficult for the Kashmir
versity authorities to convince the state bureaucracy and politicians
of whom continue to look at 13 July as sedition against the land
called Maharajas who had purchased the land and people of this b
tiful "country" for a paltry sum. But let the Kashmir civil society em
as living society and sponsor a project for writing truthful Kashmir

Puppet shows called Cabinets

wspapers tell me, the state has a council of ministers. It has a cabi-
It has a Chief Minister. It has a Deputy Chief Minister. Many times
el it is a magic realm that our broad sheets talk about , yes, I believe
magic realm where illogical scenarios appear in an otherwise real-
or even "normal" setting. Many times, I believe it was some imagi-
world which Shah of Blah talked about to his son Harun. Hon-
y, many ministers to me are like "Water Genie" that Harun had never
een.

I do not know if it is my ignorance that, despite being in print me-
, I do not know names of majority of the ministers. Or it has been
liberate effort on my part not to burden my memory cells with un-
essary information about people of no consequence or value and
ave space inside cranium for retaining something valuable and of some
worth. I might not have seen even pictures of majority of ministers, so
is true about ninety nine percent population of Kashmir.

Other than Chief Minister, whose pictures often hog the headlines,
or for his being my contemporary in the campus, who was distinct for
his demeanor and had friends in the arts block, it is only a few minis-
ters, who like wasps have been flirting from party to party in search of
nectar for past thirty years, whose faces are a bit familiar to me.

The question that haunts my mind is why I and millions others in
the state do not know or remember names or faces of the Cabinet Min-
ister, why the council of ministers is not of any importance and rel-
evance to us, the common people. It may be a subject for scholars in
universities both within and outside the state, engaged in preparing briefs
for New Delhi about Kashmir situation, to identify why the cabinet and
council of ministers are of no relevance to the common people in the
state. It may be a good subject for institutes like Centre for Policy Re-

search to conduct studies, if the state cabinet or the council of mi
ters is of any consequence to common people in the state. Without
ting embroiled in academic jargons, trite and hackneyed phrases
many of my scholars in the Universities are obsessed with, I bel
that it is lack of credibility of the government that makes the cab
and council of ministers of no consequence to the masses. The pe
are not bothered who lives in huge bungalow behind concrete and sa
bagged bunkers, who moves in tinted window cars amidst armored
and who sits in revolving "musical" chairs in the grey building tha
its architecture also looks alien to surroundings.

It is true, I not often but more often look at the state cabine
puppet show with some one from outside playing at the strings.
whenever some one tried to snatch those strings and play on his o
he was shown the door. It was not only Sheikh Abdullah who for try
to be "puppet show master" himself, was shown the door and inc
cerated for eleven years, but even trusted Ghulam Muhammad Ba
was thrown in the dustbin, like a useless cog, once he denied signing
the dotted line for changing nomenclature of Prime Minister to C
Minister. G.M. Sadiq survived as Chief Minister till he breathed his
because he signed every dotted line to erode state's autonomy, wea
the state constitution and integrate the state more intimately with
dian union. It has been perhaps for these puppet shows, that have ta
a permanent niche in my consciousness, that I and millions others
the state do not believe that the council of ministers and cabinets w
of any consequence to the people. Honestly, it has been the transfe
eight hundred Kanals of precious forest land to the Shri Amarnath Shri
Board, and the debate it generated in the state, that reminded me th
the state has a cabinet and a council of ministers that can decide suc
issues that have the potential of snowballing into a major political cri
sis in the state.These crisis can give birth to movements like the 19
civil disobedience movement or intifada of Palestinians. It was this
cision that makes me believe that it has the potential of creating a sp
that can set everything around ablaze.

I do not know who these Muzzafar Hussain Baigs and Q
Muhmmad Afzals are, what is there background, who brought them
politics and how they catapulated to such positions where they can ta

decisions about future of the people. It were there statements that made
think about them and there politic.

Let me quote the statements of these "ministers" to understand the
yche, behavior and duplicity of these proverbial "pack of nodding
ats". On June 13, 2008, Qazi Afazal, belonging to party that has been
chestrating demilitarization of the state and pleading for introduc-
n of duel currency, talking to Jammu newspaper, said: "The decision
transferring 39.88 hectares of forest land to SASB at Baltal, falling
nder Block Kukllan of the Sindh Forest Division, was a well thought of
ecision and had been taken after considering all related issues"

"An un-necessary controversy has been created from the issue and
me elements are indulging in politicking while trying to undermine
the facts to suit them. Efforts are being made to politicize the decision
intentionally without actually understanding it"

" SASB is fulfilling all the conditions laid down for the transfer of
land at Baltal, which inter-alia include payment of Rs 2.31 crores. Be-
sides, the Board had also agreed in principle to pay Rs 19.94 lakh on
account of compensatory Afforestation to be carried over 79 hectares
of land".

Muzzafar Hussain Baig said on Sunday, 15 June, 2008 to a local
news agency at Srinagar:

"PDP was blackmailed by Congress forcing it to enter into a "give
and take agreement" with which the Congress allowed completion of
work on the Mughal Road and the PDP transferred the land to the Shri
Amarnath Shrine Board. Congress ministers Gulchain Singh Charak and
Mangat Ram Sharma insisted that land be transferred to SASB if PDP
wants work on the Mughal Road to continue.

We finally agreed to Congres decision to allot land to SASB"

On Monday 18 June, 2008, he said at a meeting with Mr. A.K.
Antony India's Defence Minister,

"The issue of transfer of land to SASB had taken a critical shape
with hitherto divided Hurriyat preparing for unity that can send wrong
signal. There was need for countering propaganda"

On Thursday 19 June, 2008 he said: "The property status of the
forest land shall remain unchanged and forest land so diverted shall be

utilized only for the purpose for which it has been diverted."

If one looks at these statements, without reading them betw
lines, they expose the politics of duplicity that is being trumpe
their party. Duplicity is not politics, as many whose mentor ha
Maulana Masoodi believed. On the contrary it is a willful deceit
double edged weapon that is certain to cut the wielder, and c
badly.

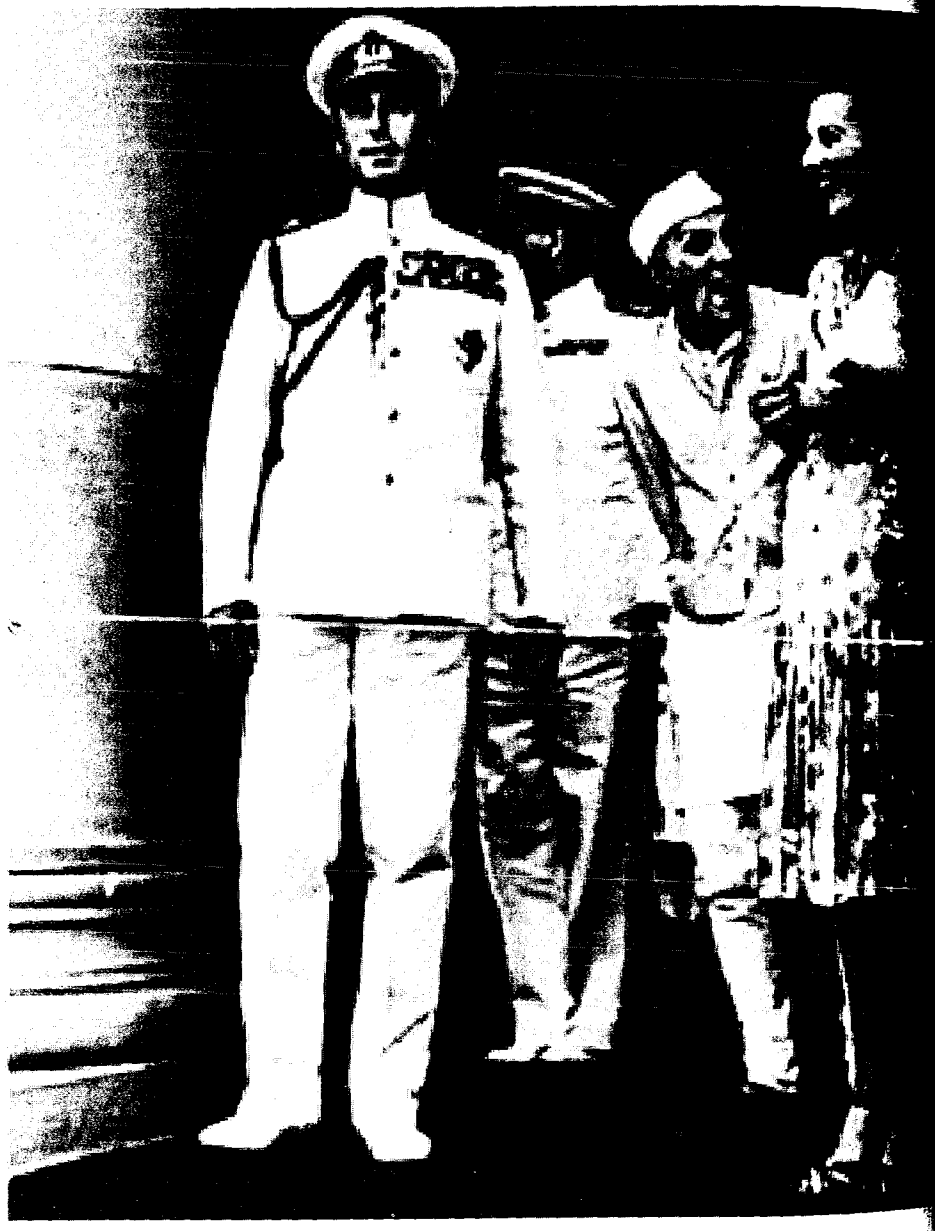
whether the SASB spark "rejuvenates" the movement, as b
by many an observers of Kashmir, or not, but it is certain to take
the politics that was born out of New Delhi's urge for changing f
Kashmir politics. New Delhi believes that the face of the 1996 b
had become uglier and repugnant with lots of pox marks on her

Sheikh Muhammad Abdulla With Mrs Indira Gandhi

Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah with Mrs Indira Gandhi
after Indira- Sheikh Accord of 1075
Dr. Farooq Abdullah is also seen in picture.

Pandit Jawahirlal Nehru with V.K Krishna Minnan
who represented India in the United Nation in 1947

h Muhammad Abdullah with Pandit Jawahir Lal Nehru in 1947.



Lord Mountbatten Ewani Mountbatten and India's
First Prime Minister Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru

Mirwaiz Muhammad Yosuf Shah one amongs the founder
of the peoples movement in Jammu and Kashmir in 1931.

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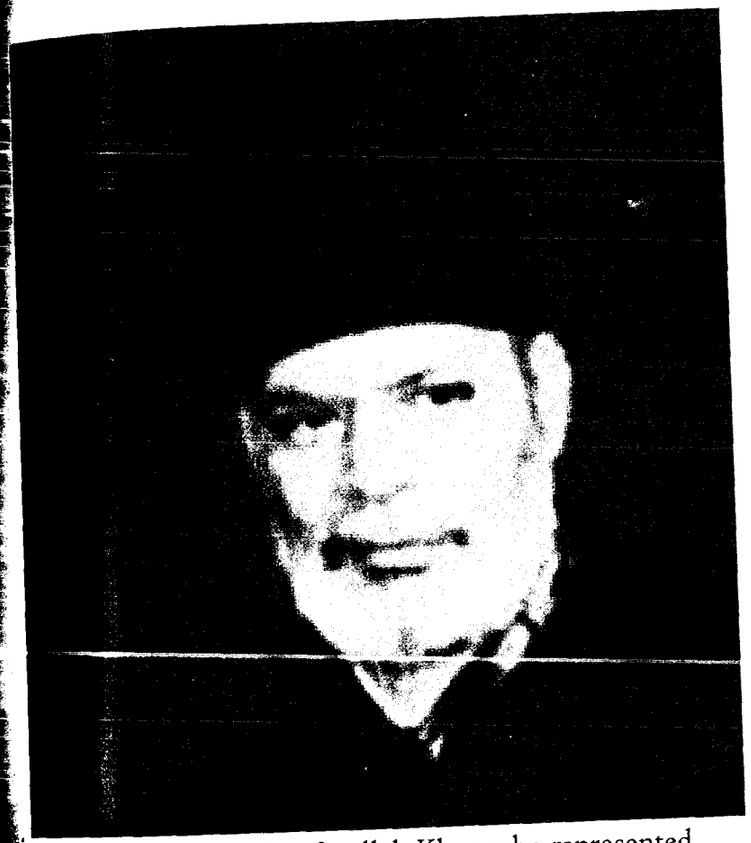
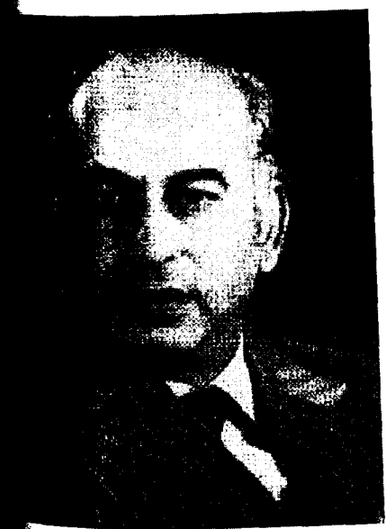
Quaid I-zam Muhammad Ali Jinnah



Sir Muhammad Zafarullah Khan who represented Pakistan at United Nation in 1947.

Choudry Ghulam Abbas with Qudratullah Shahaab



Zulifkar Bhutoo and Banazir Bhutoo

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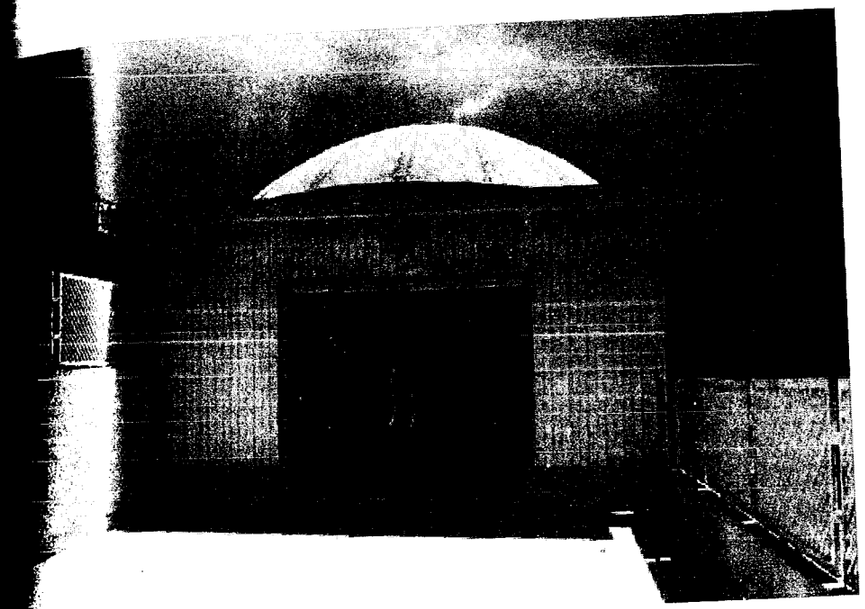
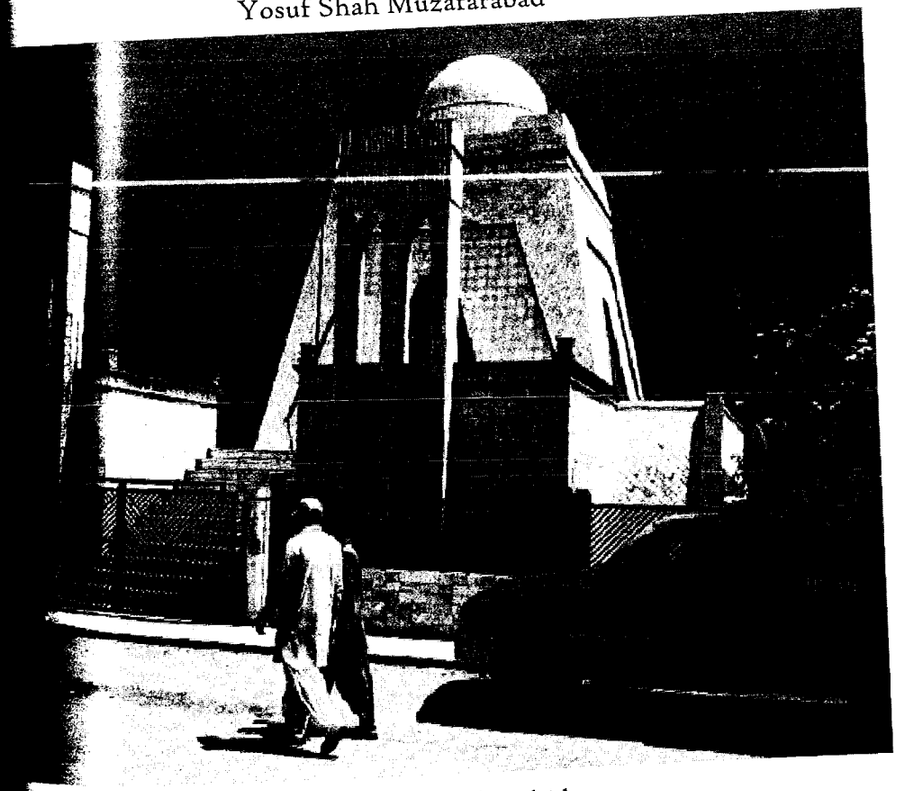
General Muhammad Zia-ul- Haq

General Pervez Musharraf



Mazar of Mirwaz Molive Muhammad
Yosuf Shah Muzafarabad



Mazar of K.H Khurshid

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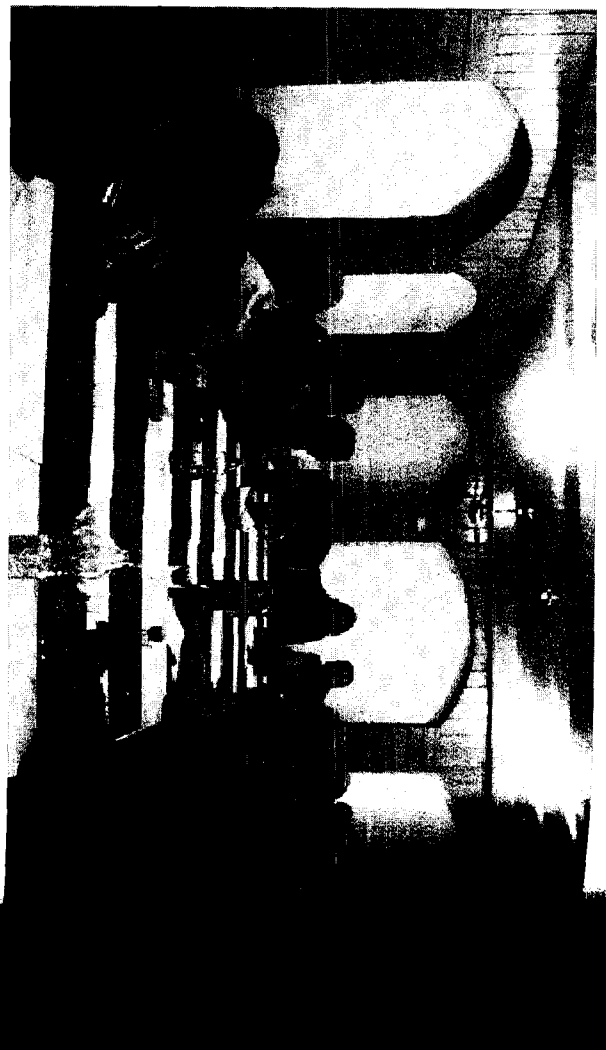

Members of Kashmir Civil Society at A Seminar

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh with APHC Leaders

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Syed Ali Shah Gaalini Leaders Of APHC

APAC Leaders Syed Ali Shah Gaalani, Shabir Shah,
Marwaiz Farooq, Nayeem Khan during 2008

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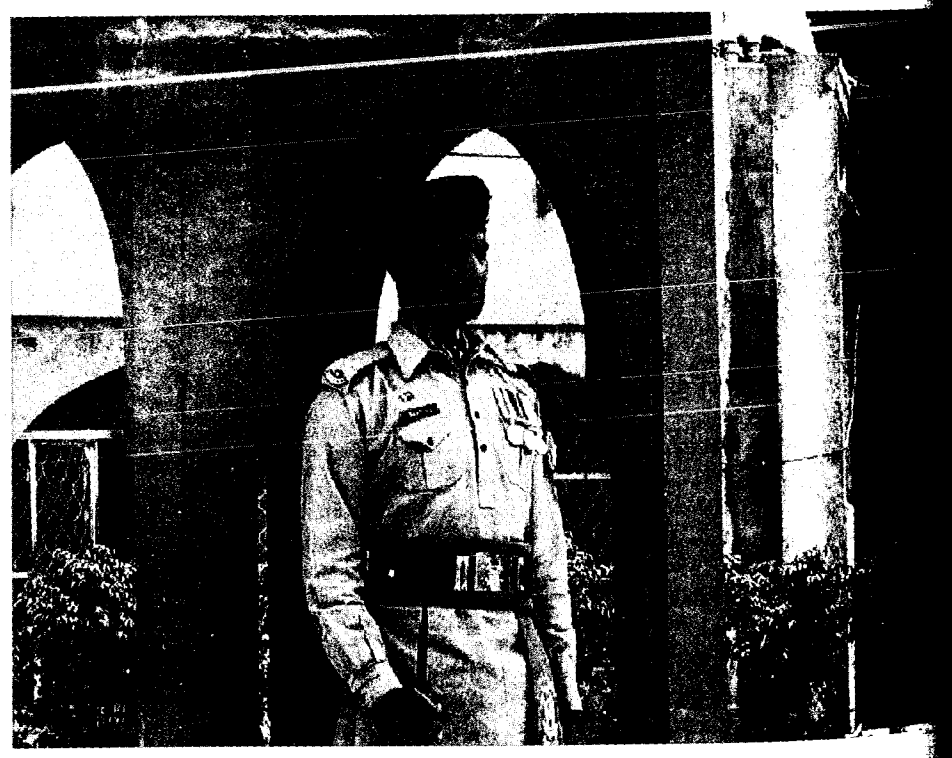
Group of Kashmir Writers Prof. Hassnain Amin Kamil
late Ashraf Sahil and Shabnum Qoom

Mirwaz with Kashmir Diaspora Leaders Dr G.N Fai and Prof Nazir Ahmad Shawl

Ambassador Yosuf Bach and Ambassador Kuldip Nayar at a Kashmir Conference in USA.

Ambassador Howad Schaffer the Limits of Influence America's Role In Kashmir

Victoria Schofield An International Kashmir Expert and Author Of couples of Books In Kashmir



A Guard at Mazar Of Alama Iqbal Lahore

Story of Double Standards

illusion. Yes, a mirage that Kashmir concerns are paramount to elhi. I did believe it strongly, so do many others, that any devel- nt in Kashmir makes the powers in the capital of a country of than a thousand million people worrisome. My belief was not ly placed; it was deeply entrenched in history. New Delhi reacted hmir more proactively in the past. It now seems that New Delhi is orried about Kashmir. The question then arises, what makes it lacent about the situation as has been obtaining in the state. Does eve that it does not have much of a sting that can paralyse the

shmir is on boil for past ten days. There is spontaneous upsurge r the state. Every day thousands come on the streets shouting s, engaging themselves with troops and police in brick batting. are shutdowns, wide spread demonstrations, ding dong battles, charges, tear gassing and firings all over Kashmir valley. Many been killed in police firing and hundreds others have been in- There is hardly a village or town or city where people have not coming on the streets, engaging police in ding dong battles, pelt- ones, throwing projectiles at them and receiving baton charges rings in exchange.

may be a matter of debate amongst the intelligentsia and political ists if it is precursor to long drawn intifada as in Palestine. Or if it ple urge to infuse life in the sagging movement.

he situation in Kashmir was brought to boil more for ineptitude government rather than the opposition in the state being on a or an opportunity for infusing new life in "Kashmir movement."

would be wrong to credit Kashmir leaders for creating a situa- hat they could not have visualized in the wildest of dreams. It was

like putting a spark on heaps of dry hey. It started with husband
wife bureaucrats agreeing to transfer about eight hundred Kan
forest land along with thousands of ciders and pines to the Ama
Shrine Board for creating a settlement. The government either
fear of Raj Bhavan or for its not realizing the dynamics of such
was caught up in the booby trap. And it were Tom Fools, believin
they were political wizards that fell prey to the bait of winning
in Delhi by supporting the land transfer.

The government instead of taking itself out of the quagmire
sinking in the morass of its own making. It was none but a civil se
governed by a code of conduct and drawing his salary from th
exchequer that upset its apple cart. He stoked the fires that h
potential of ravaging and blazing entire state. The statement m
the bureaucrat not only fanned trouble in the state but accent
total polarization in the state. It may be for the government to pr
the statement aimed at polarization was made for benefiting a pa
lar party in Jammu in the coming elections or there were mor
gerous motives behind. It was incompetence of the government i
ing its own civil servant under relevant civil rules that has brou
situation to such an impasse.

It will be difficult at this juncture to predict where the forest
fer land deal leads the state to, but it looks like reenactment of so
1964 Holy Relic Movement, when the Moi-Muqadas, hair stran
the beard of Prophet Muhammad was lifted from the Hazratbal S
When in wee hours on 27 December, 1963 news about lifting
Holy Relic from Hazratbal was whispered from ear to ear, it took
three to four hours to this whispering campaign to gather into
precedented mass movement. It was like snow flake assuming th
mous size of an avalanche that rolls down every thing in its way
Sheikh Abdullah and the Plebiscite Front leadership in jail, ther
virtual political vacuum in the state and it was inherent pote
this movement that threw up a new leadership in the state on
litical firmament. It continued to dominate the political scene
state for many more years.

The movement saw the Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad gover
and hegemony of his National Conference crumble like a pack of

ook a single Kangari to tell those who believed that they were Pha-
us of the time that nothing can withstand, how so arrogant and strong
ay be, before the people's power. The movement had shaken powers
ew Delhi, should I say it was sensitivity of the then leadership at
Delhi to Kashmir situation that it deputed Lal Bhadaur Shastari,
nd in command to Prime Minister of India, to handle the situation
Kashmir. There can be no denying that Shastari handled situation
efficiently and outwitted the knee jerking Kashmir leaders. It con-
es to be a matter of debate amongst contemporary historians if the
s of this movement were frittered away by Maulana Muhammad
Masoodi or not. To calm down people's anger, New Delhi immedi-
introduced a new set of rulers, with Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq in
ockpit, in the state and dumped its most trusted man, Bakshi to the
bin of history never to be pulled out again.

It was not only in 1964, when New Delhi reacted, but most of the
es it overacted in Kashmir. It was the land to tiller that had deprived
y, around India's first Prime Minister, of their huge estates that set
thinking about Nehru. In 1953, he reacted very sharply to just a
ement of Sheikh Abdullah not smacking of sedition but speaking
dly about assertion of sub-nationalism. Subsequently he deposed
and detained him for eleven years. In 1984, it removed Farooq
ullah not for having raised slogans of, chaun Desh Maun Desh-
hur Desh Kashir Desh, after having got inspired from birth of Bangla
h, but for joining hands with the Indian opposition leaders and or-
izing a conclave of Indian leaders in Srinagar. In 1986, after having
le Ghulam Muhammad Shah, Chief Minister of the state by fraud
deceit, was shown the door, despite his playing on tunes like, "Saw
Phalay Mujee Tum See Par Tha Aaj Bhi Hai Kal Bhai Rahi Ga," a
n in praise of Congress leadership.

The question arises if a situation like this had arisen in Kashmir
non-Congress Chief Minister in the saddle, what would have hap-
ed. On past experience, I visualize there would have been scream-
headlines in all New Delhi newspapers...,every Tom Dick and Harry
ould have visited Kashmir and demanded dismissal of the govern-
nt in power and all New Delhi outfits would have sent reports with
jects like: Security Risk; Security of State Imperiled and many would

have made recommendations for the Governors rule in the stat

It is not in other states but a sensitive state like Jammu and K that the Congress governments have always had double standa it has been its diarchy that has always added complexities to ot simple situations.

The question still remains where the present mass upsur to, if it brings down the coalition government and paves for yet governor's rule or if it could be seen as a starting point for yet phase of "Kashmir movement".

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Routes To Solutions

like filliping through the pages of history. It was like reading the days when Kashmir problem resonated in the halls of the Nations Security Council. On Wednesday, 2 July, 2008 when an national peace conference, titled, visions for peace, was in session of the magnificent halls of the House of Commons, Westminster, ned that vibrancy had returned to Kashmir discussions at the in- tional level.

was a very well conceived conference as it provided an interface en internationally recognized experts on conflict resolution and mir leadership and intelligentsia. It was a very good exercise for g experiences with eminent people like Mr. Ola T Lanka, Vice ent of the Lagting Norway, John Cushnahan, an international ex- n conflict resolution and author of European Union Report on mir, Alexander Neil of Royal United Service Institute (RUSI), head Asia Security, Richard Bonney, Chairman Europe-Islamic World nization Education Charity, Brain Cox, Vice President ICRD, Wash- DC, Peter Hain, Former Secretary of State for Northern Ireland eith Williams shadow, Foreign Secretary.

here often hangs an atmosphere of suspicion and skepticism d these international conferences on Kashmir, whether held in els, Norway, London, Washington or any where else, but they more often serve as lodestar for identifying new ways for resolution of shmir problem and ensuring lasting peace in South Asian region.

he conference under discussion organized by the Justice Founda- Kashmir Centre London was a step forward in more than many Other than debating over issues of India-Pakistan dialogue, Bi- VS Multilateral dialogue, discussion revolved around subjects ow failures of bilateralism paves way for multilateralism and how

multilateralism helps in the resolution of more complex problem. W
made the conference different was the debate and discussion on
peace processes and how the experiences gained in other internat
peace initiatives could be used in finding a peaceful resolution of
mir problem. Professor Richard Bonney, Professor of Modern Hi
at the University Leicester, author of Jihad: from Qur'an to Bin
(Palgrave Macmillan: 2004; pb. 2006; also e-book) and False Pro
the 'Clash of Civilizations' and the Global War on Terror (Peter
2008) in his presentation, Towards Just Peace in Kashmir, dwel
detail on the concept of Just Peace and its history. There seemed a
rationale in presentation when he projected India's stand on Ka
and stated that the issue of right to self-determination for Kashm
settled in 1947 and 1971, and self-determination for Kashmiri p
in 2008 means something, some how, different than it meant in
And while articulating India's apprehensions based on sudden
of its former Soviet alley, he very strongly pleaded India for not p
the apprehension as Kashmir made a different case. He made a
point against Indian leadership pursuing the policy of procrast
and how it ultimately was going against Indian interests. He mad
valuable suggestions: "For India to become genuinely engaged i
ing to make peace in Kashmir, therefore, certain clearly-define
in a road map towards peace would have to be articulated. T
would be that the specific differences between the Kashmir ca
other demands for autonomy within the Indian union would ha
studied, documented and accepted. A second step would be to s
the advantages to India of entering into meaningful engagement
issue. At the moment, given the electoral cycle in India and the
that seem to accrue to India from keeping Pakistan's attention
towards the unsettled Kashmir issue, it is too easy, in terms o
realpolitik, for Indian politicians to procrastinate sine die on
mand for genuine engagement." Prof. Richard Boney argument
the benefits seem to accrue to India from continued military
tion and all the risks seem to lie in the bolder course of action,
to seek to make peace" sounded based on rationale. For seekin
the lasting peace, there is always need for taking bolder decisi
if they may not be initially very popular. If one looks dispassion

perpetuation of Kashmir problem and its continuing to be threat to
ace in the region, it has been more or less lack of political will of
dership in the sub-continent that has prevented this problem from
ding a solution so far. Prof. Richard had very strong argument when
stated that "Instead" of delaying a solution, "a careful case needs to
built up which demonstrates conclusively to the Indian political elite
at the gains to India from the traditional position of realpolitik and
ntinued large-scale military occupation are much less than the fu-
gains from the bold step of seeking to make peace over Kashmir."
There are more gains in making peace over Kashmir and gains of this
ace will not go to the Indian middle class around which Indian polity
and economy revolves around at this time but it will percolate down to
teeming Indian millions living much below poverty line. The resolution
of this problem would in fact work as a catalyst for changing India's
economic scenario. Prof. Richard, other than the popular theory about
gains that could percolate from resolution of Kashmir hinted more im-
portant gains for Indian State. "These gains would have to be worked
out in a costs/benefits analysis, but might include (for example) im-
proved political and military stability; economic advantages in the fur-
therance of trade; a peace dividend in terms of greater legitimacy and
improved international standing; and the opportunity to concentrate
on the issues of future energy resourcing and water sharing".

It is not necessary that road maps suggested by scholars from other parts of the world need to be followed to the dot but what is important that these road maps can help the leaders of India, Pakistan and Kashmir to evolve their own roadmaps. It were not only the views of Prof. Richard that need to be debated but other speakers who talked about other peace process also made very strong case for generating a debate for finding new ways for resolution of Kashmir problem.

Right Honourable Peter Hain MP and former secretary of State for Northern Ireland has been an MP for more than seventeen years and has had vast experience in Middle East, South Asia and Northern Ireland. On the basis of his expertise and experiences in his beautifully written presentation suggested that people of Kashmir should in no situation forget their long term objectives but at the same time should not prevent themselves from achieving short term goals. He remarked that

"Pre-conditions can strangle the process at birth. It is true that entering into dialogue, even secret dialogue, with paramilitary groups carries risks. The real risk may not be so much one of political embarrassment but rather the danger of encouraging an armed group in the belief that its campaign is working. Yet if one of the keys to resolving conflict is identifying positive elements and encouraging those leaders who are prepared to contemplate an end to violence, then dialogue is a key way of making that judgment." There is need for debating and discussing issue like other peace process in academic circles within Kashmir as well.

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Chicks outside Coop

I do not know much about Omar Abdullah. I in fact know nothing about him except that he is son of Farooq Abdullah, former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, and a little bit mor. I am told he has a blog- where he makes frank admissions; perhaps I am too old now to get interested in admission of some one who is twenty years younger to me. I learnt more about this third generation Abdullah "scion" from his essay, "I am also my mother's son" published in M.J. Akbar's newly launched [COVERT].

I know nothing about Mehbooba Mufti, absolutely nothing, except that she is daughter of Mufti Muhammad Syed, who was Deputy Minister Works when I was a student of the Kashmir University, but he made it, made it to be Home Minister of India in V.P. Singh government, rarest distinction for a Kashmiri, then finally Chief Minister of the state for three years. How and why, is in itself a big story? Let me not talk about that which I believe is more than obvious. She was not my contemporary in the campus, perhaps joined couple of years after me. My friends who preferred to stay for more years on the University campus, as they had nothing better to do outside and preferred shuttling from one department to another perhaps know more about her. Student days I believe are better days to know each other and whenever I read something about Benazir Bhutto by Shyam Bhatia or Karan Thaper, I take it more authentic than by many others who saw her at a distance.

In fact I never made even an effort to know about the son and daughter duo in Kashmir's new power politics dispensation. I never even endeavored how they came in to fill in the yawning gap in the state's power politics. Perhaps they were not of any relevance to me not even to my column. This may be true of millions like me who are detached from "power politics"; the politics of profit and loss and nurse a dream that

many in the world have dreamt before.

My interest in the duo is barely a week old. It was on July 13, 20[illegible] evening while watching reportage about the martyrs day on local Tel[illegible] vision channel which was nauseatingly repeated that I got interested [illegible] them. I have been close witness to the martyr's day for decades but [illegible] had never seen such a bizarre performance by any politician from Shei[illegible] Muhammad Abdullah down to Mushtaq Tabasum on the graveyard [illegible] The body language of the duo, did tell many tales, I do not know wh[illegible] political psychoanalyst would make out from their performance at [illegible] graveyard and how the political pundits would predict about their f[illegible] ture, but on seeing them trembling at the "public wrath", I was con[illegible] vinced that they felt as threatened as tender three days old poultry chicks [illegible] outside the coop.

On seeing their performance at the martyr's graveyard, my gut feel[illegible] ing was that they are not of the mettle that can survive in the Kashmir [illegible] politics, even in power politics. In the "public wrath" against the duo I [illegible] saw writing on the wall, better understood than said. It might be a pre[illegible] supposition but having been close witness to Kashmir politics for more [illegible] than five decades now, I was reminded of a "Kangari" that was hurled [illegible] by one irate young man on 28 December 1963 during the Holy Relic [illegible] Movement at the then strongest man in Kashmir power politics, the [illegible] General Secretary of the National Conference, Abdul Rashid Bakshi, on [illegible] the Residency Road. Bakhsi Rashid made an abortive attempt to address [illegible] the people but on seeing fire in the eyes of people, "he jumped from the [illegible] jeep and ran away barefoot. His Jeep was set ablaze." Those day politi[illegible] cians were to be categorized as Z or Z-plus for providing them two four [illegible] or three tier security but politicians were always surrounded by their [illegible] henchmen.

There were lots of stories about this strong man of the National [illegible] Conference and his cohorts wielding absolute power as absolute that [illegible] no sun would dare rise and no sun would dare set without his permis[illegible] sion. But this single "kanagari" proved as a powerful detonator that [illegible] brought down an empire of political hubris and arrogance built over [illegible] eleven long years in a jiffy. This symbolic manifestation of public wrath [illegible] changed the political landscape of the state. It is a different story that [illegible] the then political leadership failed to harness this public wrath in the [illegible]

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[illegible] directions for achieving the long cherished political goals but in[illegible] used it for achieving small time political gains like release of Sheikh [illegible] dullah and his associates from prisons. The bargain was pity with[illegible] wal of conspiracy case and Hazratbal murder case against Sheikh [illegible] dullah and other Plebiscite Front leaders.

I was reminded of 29 May 1987, when after Eid-u-fitar prayers [illegible] then Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah had to face worst ever [illegible] gry mob in his life. He was not only hounded out of Eidgah but in the [illegible] rds of kh. Sanullah Bhat "showered with boots and sandals". The [illegible] velopments that followed these incidents "alarmed diplomatic circles [illegible] New Delhi." On 19 June 1987, American Ambassador in New Delhi visited Srinagar and three days after him the British High Commissioner arrived in Srinagar. The incident at Eidgah as history bears testimony was precursor to the political developments that shaped the 1990 mass upsurge that uprooted traditional Kashmir leadership and changed the contours and complexion of the State politics.

If the people's resentment at the martyr's grave yard could be seen as yet another watershed in Kashmir politics will be too early to say. It will be too early to pronounce happenings at the martyr's graveyard as effervescence or an expression of deep down hatred against them that was going to take a toll of their political future in power politics.

Omar Abdullah saw a ray of hope in his supporters who bussed from different areas to the martyr's graveyard. He saw a ray of hope in slogans raised in his favour. He saw a ray of hope in them for pelting stones at youth raising slogans in support of "freedom" and against him and smashing window panes of the houses near by. I do not see Omar Abdullah's happiness, over workers of Mian Altaf and Ali Muhmmad Sagar raising slogans in his support at the martyr's grave-yard, out of place. He has every reason to be happy, as he rightly believes that this support is sufficient to bring him into power.

You do not need a mass mandate for getting into power in Kashmir, just support of a few. It is history that Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq's supporters never crossed three digits. He ruled the state as Chief Minister for seven years (1964-1971) without people's support. I doubt if Syed Mir Qasim ever had any support outside his home constituency but he ruled the state for four years (1971-1975), perhaps he would have ruled

for more years had not Mrs. Gandhi asked him to vacate his place for Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah. The much talked about "State Constituent Assembly" came into being without a single vote being cast. In our state two percent poll percentage is seen as triumph of democracy, and ten percent as miracle of democracy , in such a situation bussed audience raising slogans in support of Omar Abdullah amidst angry protests by the fourth generation Kashmir born and brought up during late nineties, should make him complacent for getting catapulted to power. He may or may not make it to the grey building in old Zanana Park but it is high time for him to read writing on the wall which his father failed to do...

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New Dimensions and Perspectives

Sixty years is no period. In the history of nations it is a very small period. Many a sixty-year are forgotten. They do not find a mention even in the footnotes of histories. But sometimes it is a day that makes the difference. It is a day that pushes a nation into the gorges of despondency. It is a day that changes the course of history. It is a day that shapes the destiny of nations. And some times it is a day that becomes the D-day- bringing in a millennium of joy, joviality, peace and prosperity.

The thousand year's history of Kashmir has had many a sixty years that do not find a mention even in its endnotes or footnotes. Is it not true that we hardly know anything about the struggle of early settlers in this land? Our history has many gaps, wide gaps spreading over hundreds of years; history tells us nothing about these years. Not to speak about people, who might have raised banners of revolt against tyrannies, oppression and subjugation in the past? There is no mention of many sovereign kings and emperors that might have conquered territories or suffered defeats. Many a Spartacus might have been born here who might have suffered and sacrificed for delivering people out of tyrannies, but our chronicles tell us nothing about the heroes of the yore. There are stories of benevolence, piety and sagacity in our literature but there are no major tales of chivalry in our folk literature that could be seen as a lodestar for guiding us through dark alleys of disappointments. It is perhaps for this deficiency in our folk literature that many a time as a nation we are overwhelmed by disappointments, but there is something inherent in our psyche that makes us to bubble with enthusiasm even during disappointments.

India and Pakistan as nation states are sixty years old, so old is uncertainty of Jammu And Kashmir State. The question that is asked more

than often is, when was this uncertainty going to end? The answer [illegible] be, a day or it can be decades.

In 1930, no one would have dreamt of the Dogra rule crumbling like a pack of cards in less than two decades period. It was just a [illegible] that changed the course of history. It was just 13 July, 1931, it was events one after another that worked like whirl wind and washed away everything in its way. The spy who committed sacrilege of the Holy Quran in Jammu would not have in wildest of his dreams imagined that his act would work as potent catalyst to make his Highness run away from his kingdom in the darkness of the night. He would not imagine that it would take only a day to pull down an empire built over a century. There are many instances in our contemporary history that the strongest of the strong rulers were washed away like wooden drifts in gushing Sindh Nallah under public fury. It in fact is not years that are important but the days.

The "Kashmir Tragedy" was born in a day. The "formal commencement of the dispute" in the words of British historian, Alastair Lamb started at about 9 O'clock on the morning of 27 October 1947. The fatalist blame destiny for the happenings in 1947. It gave birth to political uncertainty and caused four wars between India and Pakistan, consumed thousands of human lives and brought destruction to the most beautiful part of the world. Many point finger of accusation towards the then leadership particularly Sheikh Abdullah who for his myopic understanding of the emerging scenario in the sub-continent crossed to the wrong side of the fence. Some saw the birth of tragedy in the then Pakistan leadership losing their patience at Maharaja's dilly dallying tactics over deciding future of the state. They blame some Pakistani leaders for provoking tribal raids against the Maharaja of the state. Some blame the Congress leaders for overtly and covertly building pressures on the last feudal ruler of the state for acceding to India in violation of the laid down norms that had caused birth of two independent dominions. Some see deployment of large contingents of Patila forces in the state as a cause for provocation in Pakistan leadership.

Some see the cause of tragedy in the geo-strategic location of the state. "Had the state of Jammu and Kashmir been situated almost anywhere else in the sub-continent, had it embraced a lesser area, Indo-

Pakistan argument over its future might not have been conducted with particular intensity". Alastair Lamb sees reason for the intensity of this problem in its geo-strategic location, "The state however lies not only adjacent to both India and Pakistan but also on key frontier region which gives access to Central Asia, a part of the world which for more than a century attracted the attention of British strategist whose attitudes were to great degree inherited by their successors."

The question arises, has the geo-strategic importance of this state diminished after the end of cold war? This is a very difficult question to answer in the post 9/11 complex global situation. Reality is that it is not possible to change the geography of the state. So for its geographical location, it continues to have its geo-strategic importance. In fact some more dimensions have been added to the complexity of issue over a period of time. The fragile and volatile Afghanistan in the neighborhood of the state is a global concern. If one analyses the recently undertaken foreign troops by the United State Presidential candidate Barrack Obama, it seems that Afghanistan will be the focal point of the United States. It is going to emerge as first priority conflict zone for the United States. China in our neighborhood is yet another factor that is "going to pursue" a more muscular foreign policy. The China's hardening stand towards India is yet another, for which the state would continue to have its geo-strategic importance. In the words of Brahma Chellancy, Professor of Strategic Studies in the Centre for Policy Research New Delhi, "China's motives remain a puzzle. Yet there are certain disturbing parallels between what is happening now and the events between 1959 and 1962 that led the Chinese invasion." (Covert 15 July-31 July 2008). The territorial ambitions of China may be a reality or an illusion but the emerging scenario in our neighborhood demands a more pragmatic approach of all the contending parties towards Kashmir problem. With volatile neighborhood, expectations like eliminating visa restrictions and dreaming of traveling between India and Pakistan, two old enemies, without any police check would be talking about utopia. He lives in make belief world who talks about viable trade relations without removing the main stumbling block in the relations of the two countries. Ending of this sixty years uncertainty and acrimony is only a day away if leadership in India and Pakistan adopt the policy as was

adopted by Charles de Gaulle in September 1959. History bears [illegible] mony that in June 1958, the French called upon their mythical [illegible] War II "hero," Charles de Gaulle to become Prime Minister, in order [illegible] defeat the Algerian Muslim terrorists.

However, de Gaulle changed French public opinion almost o[illegible] night when he announced freedom for Algeria and made his p[illegible] sing in symphony. "If our great "hero," the right-winger Charle[illegible] Gaulle, calls for Algerian independence, it must be the right thi[illegible] do," most French said. I saw spark of Charles de Gaulle in Prime M[illegible] ter, Manmohan Singh when he changed nation's mood in favour o[illegible] nuclear deal; he will have to go a step further and earn perennial p[illegible] to more than a billion people.

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Hillary Clinton's Kashmir Agenda

[illegible]mir is again in the spotlight. Ten months after it had hogged head-[illegible] in New Delhi press, dominated the panel discussions on the satel-[illegible]levision channels and found good space in the international me-[illegible] it once again got wide coverage for the shocking and shameful in-[illegible]nt at Shopian. This time it took about more than a week for New [illegible]hi media to wake up to the realties and come up with editorials on [illegible] incident. The July-August 2008 situation saw a paradigm shift in [illegible] approach of a section of Indian intelligentsia for ending of political [illegible]certainty in Kashmir. Many important opinion makers advocated [illegible]nceding to the majority aspirations and some very strongly pleaded [illegible] granting right to self-determination to the people of the state. The [illegible]horus of New Delhi columnists and intellectuals was joined by many [illegible]ternationally recognized political observers and opinion makers. How-[illegible]er, the 31 May 2009 incident that shook every conscious and consci-[illegible]ious Kashmiri down the spine is yet to stir the conscience of this [illegible]tion of intelligentsia. This ugly incident like many other uglier hap-[illegible]nings of the past may fade into pages of history but there are indica-[illegible]ions that in the coming months there will be some major forward move-[illegible]ent towards the resolution of the Kashmir dispute that will continue [illegible] keep it under sharper focus than before. The recent visit of Mr. Wil-[illegible]am Burns, US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs to the sub-[illegible]ontinent is indicative that the United States has started renewing its [illegible]terest in this South-Asian problem. He, during his visit to New Delhi [illegible]anded over a letter from the US President Barack Obama to the Indian [illegible]overnment. The letter whose contents have not been disclosed is re-[illegible]portedly written on "stabilizing Afghanistan and Pakistan". There have [illegible]been reports about the letter containing a reference to Kashmir which [illegible]was made obvious by Mr. Burns through his statement that "any reso-

lution on Kashmir has to take into account the wishes of the K
people." This line is more or less a refrain of the Pakistan p
Kashmir.

The stance is more or less reminiscent of the Clinton adm
tion when the then Assistant Secretary of State Robin Raphel ha
that the "US does not recognize that the instrument of accessio
that Kashmir is forever an integral part of India." This statem
voked a lot of debate in India. Some Indian observers saw the st
as "Nixonian tilt" and as "United States decision to "needle
Kashmir". This statement that came at the time of Hazratbal s
seen by commentators like S. Nihal Singh as "slow Chinese
method". India objected to the statement and commented tha
bound to encourage militants. It was also seen as a deliberate at
aggravate the complex situation caused due to Hazratbal sieg
reacting harshly to the statement made Washington issue a cl
tion. A veteran Indian Journalist Bhart Bushan wrote, "The cl
tion reiterates two important policy shifts on Kashmir under the
Administration; First Kashmir is not a bilateral issue between In
Pakistan. Second it asserts as a superpowers are wont to do: that
an active interest in South Asia and that it is aware of its histor

The statement of Mr. Burns though seen as a shift from th
administration yet did not evoke a harsher response as had be
during the Clinton administration. New Delhi instead downplay
statement. Commenting on this, the Foreign Secretary, Shivs
Menon said "The simple thing is I don't see a shift... I think, w
seen statements like this in the past and I am sure we will see
the future."

The line "resolution of Kashmir to the aspiration of people
words of Stephen Cohen, "Thus seemingly well intentioned p
frequently heard from Americans and other outsiders, that Kashm
consulted or have a voice in determining their own fate is threa
to both Islamabad and Delhi." It was seen as welcome statem
Pakistan and felt that this statement echoes its most favored line
also did not react to the line as it had been doing. It was welcom
most of the Kashmir leaders demanding "right to self-determin
The question arises that does this change indicate a positive shift

apitals towards the resolution of a key issue between the two coun-

The US understanding of the region has undergone a sea change
9/11. It is no more region of less strategic importance. The per-
ons of the United States have been summed up by Thomas P
nton in his paper, U.S. Strategic Interests in South Asia : " The lit-
ure on US strategic interests in South Asia is relatively thin com-
d with other parts of the world, in particular regions immediately
st and west. The reason is far to seek: US strategic interests in South
are low.. The United States is not and, for foreseeable future can-
be militarily threatened from South Asia..." (Dilemmas of National
rity and Cooperation in India and Pakistan Edited by Hafeez Malik)
e United States as stated by Richard Holbrooke, US special envoy to
stan and Afghanistan now sees Afghanistan and Pakistan of vital
rest to the United States national security, and that India is a coun-
that must be kept in closest consultation with. The United States
eves that its interests in the region cannot be safeguarded without
and it considers, India an absolutely critical country in the re-
n.

Many a solutions for the resolution of Kashmir problem have been
oted in the past by the US think tanks. There have been debates and
cussions over partition of the state, soft-borders between two parts
Kashmir, a region-by-region basis plebiscite, UN Trusteeship, Trieste
even latest one Northern Ireland model. There have been nine in-
national conferences in Washington organized by Kashmir Ameri-
Council involving US senators, think tanks and diplomats for ex-
oring all possible solutions based on various models for the resolu-
of the problem. The Obama Administration's regional approach to
ious conflicts in the world has added more significance to the prob-
. The Obama administration has made it explicitly clear that it be-
ves that the key to permanent peace in the region lies in the resolu-
of Kashmir dispute to the aspirations of the people of the state.
is, when seen in right historical perspective is nothing but endorsing
right to self-determination for the people of the state.

The Obama Administration after taking over did not pursue that
igorously its regional approach in the region as it waited for the re-

sults of elections in India. Immediately after the new government t over, it intensified its efforts. Now when the new government has ta over the proposed visit of the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton to India in July is of far more significance vis-à-vis Kashmir. Political servers in India and Pakistan believe that while the Secretary of S will build pressure on the countries to resume the stalled dialogue, will also express its worry over perpetuation of Kashmir dispute.

True, Hillary Clinton will not be carrying a magic wand in her h to resolve the Kashmir problem but she will be endeavoring to m the two countries talk and also put a pace in dialogue for resolving Kashmir. The Obama administration like Clinton administration be guided by three principles, one, the LOC cannot be the basis of so tion, two, any solution arrived should reflect aspirations of the pe of Kashmir and three, all kinds of violence should be ended. But comparison to the Clinton administration, that nudged the Indian Pri Minister to extend a hand of friendship to Pakistan before the Ka war, the Obama administration will ask for bolder steps for ensur peace in the region. The statement of Under Secretary of State in N Delhi, a few days back, is indicative that unlike the Bush Adminis tion, the Obama Administration will "ask them to go beyond bilateral- ism on Kashmir, outside the Simla Agreement and ask for space for tervention." The US intervention has helped on many occasions the countries in resolving the problem, to quote latest one was the Ka As very rightly said by a former diplomat, "When fears of an all war between India and Pakistan arose in consequence of the conflic Kargil, the US wasted no time to have the issue resolved". "Ga Wanted to Arbitrate Peace Kashmir hits headlines. It hits headlines w millions converge on the roads and demand right to self-determin tion. It hits headlines when troops use force to prevent the protest from marching to LOC or to UN office at Sonawar or to historic Chowk. It hits headlines when curfew is imposed. It hits headlines w ballot box are stuffed with votes or returned empty. It has been in he lines for past sixty one years.

It is only an ostrich mind that denies seeing these headlines. thinking minds in India and abroad have always read with openne minds the writings on the wall. It was not for the first time when ho

dian minds in the wake of recent mass uprising in Kashmir recog- ized that aspirations of people in this state need to be respected. It is ot for the first time when rational intellectuals like Ms. Arundhati Roy, Mr. Vir Sanghvi, Mr. Pankaj Mishra, Professor Rajmohan Gandhi, Mr. waminathan S. A. Aiyar, Mr. Gautam Navlakha, Dr. Sumantra Bose, Mr. Ramratan Chatterjee, Mr. Praful Bidwai, Professor Angana Chatterji, Mr. Harish Dhawan and many others in India, to the annoyance of hardliners, joined many other international voices that advocate reso- lution of the Kashmir problem in tune with the aspiration of the people. It is not for the first time that voices of dissent on New Delhi handling Kashmir have been raised. There were voices against conceding to the request of last feudal ruler of Kashmir Maharaja Hari Singh for airlift- ing troops to Kashmir in 1947. Full throat Voices were raised against first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru taking the Kash- mir dispute to the United Nation on 1 January 1948. No less than a person like father of Indian Nation, Mahatma Gandhi had reservation about New Delhi handling Kashmir. In mid December in 1947 he said, "In Kashmir, India was recklessly throwing away its fortune while ig- noring the needs of its starving millions. It is a tragedy and shame. For long we fought the Charkah (spinning wheel) and the moment we have power in our hands we forget it. Today we look up to the army... we throw away money recklessly..... And a handful of persons were be- hind this communal conflict in Kashmir." None other than Mahatma Gandhi had offered to work as a mediator on Kashmir. On December 25, 1948, he said, "Can we not settle the Kashmir issue between our- selves... one should admit one's mistakes... I shall advise India and Pa- kistan to sit together and decide the matter... the Maharaja can step aside... if they want an arbitrator they can appoint me." His suggestion was turned down by none other than his own disciple Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who like Mountbatten thought that Gandhi has "lost his wis- dom." Historian of international eminence and expert on South Asian Affairs, Stanley Wolpert believes, "If Nehru had only listened to Gandhi, inviting him to arbitrate the Kashmir conflict with Jinnah, India and Pakistan might have been spared three wars and tragic loss of countless lives, at least fifty thousand, who were Kashmiris." (Shameful Flight by Stanley Wolpert). On January 30, Indian nation will be observing sixti-

eth "martyrdom of father of nation" but Kashmir problem which had so generously offered to arbitrate, continues to remain on the It needs to be pondered over by all thinking minds in this natio more than a thousand million people, why this problem that fathe the nation had offered to arbitrate has so far failed a resolution. T there is no Mahatma around but there is no dearth of sane and w people in South Asia or in the world whose collective wisdom co translate dream of Gandhi and find a peaceful solution of Kashmir

A journalist friend in New Delhi a few days back told me that Ka mir will now be independently handled by Mr. A.... He has full auth ity from the Prime Minister. There will be no interference in his h dling from A ministry or B Ministry. It is Prime Minister's discretio allot portfolios to ministers and departments to officers.

In retrospect: Kashmir problem has caused three major wars. It caused hundreds of bloody battles along eight hundred kilometer lo Ceasefire line. India and Pakistan Governments or Non Governme Organizations are yet to do computation about loss of life in thousa of skirmishes along the ceasefire line, in scores of battles and th major wars. The two nations are yet to evaluate dispassionately the c of the perpetuation of this problem both in terms of men and materi Kashmir continues to be a nuclear flash point in the region. People India and Pakistan may not know how non-resolution of the Kashm problem has been affecting them but people of Kashmir are fully co scious of the losses, both human and material. They have suffered sinc the day it landed in the United Nations Security Council. The unoffici figures about human loss suffered during past sixty years suggest a co lossus figure of half a million and during past eighteen years mo than hundred thousand. True, no calculations have been done by an organization and agency about the economic losses suffered by the st after the birth of militancy, and the ruins and rabble in towns and vi lages tell their horrendous tales. It is this death and destruction su fered by the people of Kashmir that makes them restive. Is this proble very complex? Is it that complex that it cannot find an amicable an lasting solution? Many thinking minds in the capital have started think ing on this question. The Kashmir dispute, problem, and issue whatev way you look at it is not that complex that it cannot be resolved o

gotiating table. Then what makes it so complex? Looking at it dispas- sionately, it is the policy of procrastination that has defeated resolution of this problem. Both Nehru and Mountbatten thought of referendum in 1948 as a solution, which they believed would go in favour of India. Even Mrs. Gandhi believed that if a referendum would have been held after 1971, India would have won." The history of "Kashmir dispute" unfolds that many an important opportunities for resolving the Kash- mir problem on permanent basis suffered not for its complexity but for the bureaucratic stubbornness" and lack of resoluteness of leadership.

Sixty years history bears testimony that carrot and stick policy has not worked. It is history that intimidation and terror; curfews and de- tentions have not helped in ending uncertainty in the state. The Bakshi's doctrine of political corruption achieved nothing other than destroy- ing social fabric of Kashmir, Sadiq's tailored doctrine of liberalization failed to create any political impact and Sheikh Abdullah's politics of accords did not succeed in changing people's mind set. All these doc- trines had brief lives. History has a lesson, the lesson that has been learnt by many thinking minds at New Delhi. There is a need of involving these thinking minds for ending political uncertainty in Kashmir and also in the South Asia .

Villainous Hero of Kash

Is it coincidence or a planned move? This question ticked my mind when another book, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah , Tragic Hero of Kashmir by Ajit Bhattacharjea published by Roli Books, New Delhi was added to political bibliography on Kashmir. The book was released by Vice President of India, Hamid Ansari in last week of September at New Delhi and it arrived at Srinagar on second week of October (Thanks to Eid-ul-Fitr). It has been released at a time when state was preparing for the assembly elections. The book release reminded me another biography released in 1995. In that year in similar circumstances, Farooq Abdullah, Kashmir's Prodigal Son by Aditya Sinha published by UBS Publishers Distributors, and the book was released before the state went for elections during the Governors rule. The release of the book on Farooq Abdullah in 1995 was seen by many political observers in India as an exercise to create a national consensus in New Delhi for reinstalling Farooq Abdullah as Chief Minister of the State. The laudatory book on Farooq Abdullah projected him to powers in Delhi in mid nineties, when the state was in the grip of militancy, as the only choice for safeguarding Indian interests in Kashmir. The powers in New Delhi were made to believe that the National Conference cadres which were still intact could steer the state out of quagmire of violence and play as good a role as that by them in welcoming Indian troop on October 27, 1947.

The question now arises that if the book on Sheikh Abdullah would convince powers, at New Delhi, that in the given political scenario of the Jammu and Kashmir it was the National Conference, the party founded by Sheikh Abdullah in 1938 on the advice of Jawaharlal Nehru that could safeguard Indian interests in Kashmir. On the face of it, publishing a book on Sheikh Abdullah at this juncture of Kashmir history when people have been coming out in support of "Azadi" in hundreds

of thousands, sounds out of tune to the common man, but Sheikh continues to hold interest for academic purposes even in contemporary Kashmir. There are many lessons in failures for contemporary Kashmir leadership. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah was most enigmatic and complex political leader of Kashmir. He had a meteoric rise to the top slot of Kashmir politics and continued to dominate the political scene for more than fifty years. True, the younger generation knows nothing about this tall man of Kashmir except that they are paying for his Sins. Seen in right perspective he makes his presence felt in Kashmir politics more for wrong than right reasons, even twenty six years after his death. He has hardly any supporter amongst contemporary Kashmir historians. It is only a few who continue to thrive on the crumbs of the Abdullah family that continue to make vain attempts to project him as the leader of Kashmir. Majority of historians hold him responsible for the political uncertainty in the state. Many see him as a nationalist who had a deeper urge to restore identity of Kashmir but for his lack of vision and political skills embroiled himself in a situation where from he could not come out. Lots of books have been written on Kashmir Freedom Struggle. Some of them are quite exhaustive but what could be pronounced as authentic and unbiased account of Kashmir Freedom struggle is yet to be written. There can be no denying that books on freedom struggle by Prem Nath Bazaz , Muhammad Yusuf Saraf or by Rashid Taseer are comprehensive but they suffer from objectivity on one or the other count. Bazaz's books lack credibility for his professing a particular politics, so is true about Saraf's book. But compared to Bazaz's books Saraf's two volumes are more authentic and researched so far history of struggle against feudal rule is concerned. There can not be denying that many historians and political commentators from outside the state have published plethora of books on the accession story, role of united nations or the ongoing movement for right to self-determination. But there is no credible literature about post 1947 Kashmir politics by Kashmir historians. It is not lack of professionalism in our historians that prevents them from writing truthful history, but timidity, expediency and cowardice. They need to shed shyness and record facts for posterity.

The book by Ajit Bhattacharjea on Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah is

a good addition to contemporary political literature of Kashmir. The book encompasses not only fifty years political career of Sheikh Abdullah but documents contemporary Kashmir history in lucid style. True, it is journalistic account of the life of one of controversial political leaders of Kashmir and suffers for details and is deficit in Scholarship, but 238 pages book gives a panoramic view of Kashmir political scene during feudal rule and after. The book at many places looks like a second version of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah's autobiography. In this book Sheikh Abdullah on occasions emerges more Indian than Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patil. He was disenchanted with top Congress leaders for their agreeing to partition of India. Sheikh suffered a dilemma, on one side he had sympathy for Pakistan but on the other side, for his friendship with Nehru family, he drifted away from the two nation theory. The author writes, "Abdullah shared disenchantment of Muslim leaders who had stood by Congress."

The author has not endeavored to make an in-depth study of certain important benchmarks in contemporary history that have an impact not only on Kashmir but on the sub-continent. The most controversial subject in the contemporary Kashmir history is the question of accession. This subject has engaged the attention of many historians of international repute. There are as many versions of accession as there are books on Kashmir dispute. On this question the author has preferred to cling to the official version. There can be no denying that Sheikh was very good public orator who could whip up public sentiments to his advantage, but he lacked independent thinking. From the new book on him it emanates that he had no originality to lead his people to their destiny. The idea of converting the Muslim Conference was given to him by Prem Nath Bazaz and Nehru persuaded to translate it into reality. It were the communists who believed Kashmir to be a laboratory for testing their ideas and gave him the socialist doctrine of Naya Kashmir that according to Bhattacharjea, "even Nehru had been unable to persuade the Congress to go this far." The author has looked at the 1953 happening from the populist point of view, ignoring the more subtle reasons for removal of Sheikh Abdullah. The book in reality is not candid account of Abdullah's life but a sympathetic biography.

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The book ends at subtitle, the deserted memorials, which tells much more than words how history looks at Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah after his death.

Porous Permanent Synon

Cross LoC trade: Is it a dream realized? Or dream shattered? Is it c chest-diplomatic-gamble that India and Pakistan are playing ove future status of Jammu and Kashmir? Ostensibly it seems that th year old war of attrition over Kashmir between two neighbor stopped over a chessboard. And now who outsmarts whom in this g of wits and succeeds in lending their own meaning to Loc nee C the Loc becomes border, yes porous synonymous permanent?

Notwithstanding this predicament of political analysts, it was a toric day for the 1.3 million Kashmiris living on the two sides o Line of Control (LoC), when trucks rumbled across the Jhelum V Road after sixty one years. Thousands of people bubbling with em saw off a fleet of 13 trucks decorated with buntings and flowers as crossed over to "Azad Kashmir" from the Kaman Post Bridge on th of control, about hundred kilometers from Srinagar. Tears trickled d the brimming eyes of people as the convoy of 14 trucks loaded food items and handicrafts from Muzzafarabad reached Uri. The tional outburst of the people on this occasion in itself is a subje political psychoanalysts that need to analyze. The rattling of truc the Jhelum Valley Road after sixty-one years is important on more one count. It is important for being a first step towards resumin suspended trade links between two parts of the state separated b artificial line initially named as the ceasefire line. This temporary was fallout of the UN Resolutions calling India and Pakistan to fighting for peacefully resolving the dispute over the future of the of Jammu and Kashmir. India complained to the UN Security Co on January 1, 1948 against Pakistan and wanted the organisati declare Pakistan as aggressor. The UN adopted the resolution on ary 1, 1949. It helped enforce ceasefire between the two countries

UNSC Resolution of April 21, 1948, one of the principal UN resolu- ons on Kashmir, stated that "both India and Pakistan desire that the estion of the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India or Pakistan ould be decided through the democratic method of a free and impar- ial plebiscite". Subsequently, UNSC resolutions reiterated the same and. The UNCIP Resolutions of August 3, 1948 and January 5, 1949 einforced the UNSC resolutions. In the wake of crushing defeat of Pa- istan in 1971 war the ceasefire line was renamed as the LoC after ndia and Pakistan signed an agreement at Shimla , a health resort in e Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. The changing of nomenclature en in the right perspective of post 1972 India and Pakistan relations has not been of much a consequence. It did not attain the meaning of a permanent border as interpreted by many Indian analysts at the time of signing of the Shimla agreement.

In the birth of the ceasefire line the state, particularly the Kashmir Valley, had lost the jugular vein of its economy. The demand for open- ng of this road has been resonating in the state for the past over fifty e years. The demand emerged as one of the primary demands along ith the demand for the right to self-determination after a resolution as adopted in all parties' state people's convention at Srinagar in 1968. he demand for opening of this road often echoed in Kashmir during nters when the Srinagar-Jammu highway got blocked for days caus- g shortage of essentials in the valley. But what could be seen as an rganized movement for opening of the JV Road was never started in e state by any of the political party. The opening of the road more an often figured in the election manifestos of the National Confer- nce but it was mostly cosmetic. During the recent agitation over allot- ent of land to Amarnath Shrine Board, when Hindu chauvinist blocked rinagar-Jammu road and stopped all supplies to Kashmir, the demand sumed added significance. People in millions converged on the roads manding opening of the blocked road along with the demand for the ht to self-determination. The road has a history. It was this road that nnected Kashmir to the rest of the world, particularly to the Central an states that were traditional markets for handicrafts and agricul- e produce of the state. The resumption of trade along this tradi- al trade route of Kashmir, though symbolic at present, in every like-

lihood is expected to pave way for the reopening of the traditional ... kets for Kashmir handicrafts in the Central Asian states and ... neighbouring countries. It is also an important step towards endi... stalemate between India and Pakistan on Kashmir. In economic ... the opening of this trade route, if pursued with sincerity of purpo... the two countries, can be compared with the crumbling of the B... Wall for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The opening of trade ... has widely been hailed by political parties and leaders on both the ... of Loc. And unlike the past, was not opposed by the militant organisa... and Syed Ali Geelani, a towering Kashmir leader known for his st... ideas about the resolution of Kashmir. In 2005, militants and Syed ... Geelani had opposed starting of bus service on the road. It was ... being done at the behest of the US as a step towards making the ... permanent border. True, no political party or leader has oppose... sumption of trade on this road but there are also some dissenting voi... on both the side who see it "as deviation from the original stand ... by Pakistan." As was observed by Pakistan newspaper, "There are ge... ine concerns that the move would give false impression of all OK, ... the real issue that has bedeviled relations between the two coun... for the last sixty years is there." The opening of the road about ... and a half years back for enabling the people living in two parts of ... state to meet each other failed to grow beyond symbolism. The bus ... vice, which was seen as a major confidence-building measure (C... failed to bring in the desired results due to intricate and self-defe... procedures adopted for providing travel documents to the people ... travel across the LoC has been made more cumbersome than trave... on an international visa. Hardly a thousand people have so far cr... over to Kashmir from Azad Kashmir during the past three years. ... fact, got defeated because of the bureaucratic mindset in the two ... tals; otherwise, three years was a sufficient period for blunting the h... edges of the travel document procedures and creating an environ... for enabling free travel across the LoC for all the state subjects. To ... trade across the LOC a success, there is need for removing all res... tions for enabling the people of the state to move freely between ... parts of the state. The opening of the trade links has generated a... optimism in the people in general and traders in particular, bu...

political analysts in the state are sceptical about the opening of the road ... and see it as a move towards converting the LoC into a permanent bor... der. The doubts in people have been strengthened by none other than ... statements made by Pakistan President, Asif Ali Zardari

The traders believe that it would be the start of a long journey to... wards economic prosperity between two parts of Kashmir. To see the ... trade activity pick up and get the desired fruits, there is need for taking ... steps for establishing basic facilities like telecommunication, postal, ... courier, and banking services on the "pattern of province to province ... activity" on both sides. Oscillating between optimism and skepticism, ... an ordinary Kashmiri is looking for the day when shopkeepers in ... Srinagar will be vending shalwar-kameez from Pindia, sandals from ... Peshawar, astrakhan caps from Fata, and rock salt from Punjab. The ... lovers of Urdu literature are waiting for the day when books published ... in Pakistan would be freely available in Srinagar.

The optimism in people can be fortified by simplifying the proce... dures for traveling across. The free movement of people between the ... two parts of Kashmir will be defiantly a way forward resolving the is... sue that kept peace in South Asia hostage for six decades.

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Kashmir, A "Critical Task" for Oba

"Barack Hussein Obama was elected the 44th president of the Uni States on Tuesday, sweeping away the last racial barrier in Americ politics with ease, as the country chose him as its first black chief e ecutive." Read the first sentence of the New York Times lead story o November 2008. He pulled down racial barriers! What then? Wil make a difference to me? I started looking for an answer to this que tion. I think I might have many invisible friends around the globe, Palestine, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and in WANA who are looking fo answer to this question.

Obama has made history. Yes, he undoubtedly made history. It i improbable dream realized, a dream that cost Martin Luther King life. A black man in White House would have been a dangerous thou not that far away. The African-American son of a first-generation migrant pushed his way to the White House, making racists say, let White House be painted now black. In an electoral battle that kept world guessing for twenty one months, he emerged triumphant. It not an ordinary battle that he won as very aptly written by a US co mentator, "Showing extraordinary focus and quiet certainty, Mr. Oba swept away one political presumption after another to defeat first Hill Clinton, who wanted to be president so badly that she lost her bear and then John McCain, who forsook his principles for a campaign b on anger and fear." It was an unprecedented victory, an achieve for social change. In the words of Paul Krugman, an American col nist, "this year's presidential election was a clear referendum on po cal philosophies, and the progressive philosophy won."

It was in fact a vote against the follies of George that have pu America into worst ever crisis in its recent history. He emerged vic ous because he saw the cost his country was paying for two bloody p

wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, that had affected every individual in country. It was but for this mad war mongering thinking of the dunce sident that has no parallel in the history of the USA, that govern- nt had failed to protect its citizen. The analysis of his campaign eches reveal that he believes that he could regulate economy fairly, the air clean and food safe, ensure health care to sick, educate ldren to compete in globalize world by reordering his domestic and ternational policies. The question arises if I (a South Asian) was going be beneficiary of his restructured and reordered policy and philoso- y. He is committed to withdraw from Iraq , a country that has been eding, bleeding profusely for past many years. He is determined to nk about the no-win war in Afghanistan.

What has set me, perhaps many others in the sub-continent to think where we stand in the United States reordered political philosophy. President-elect Barak Obama's understanding of the South-Asian olitics, Kashmir problem dovetailed to crisis in Afghanistan. It is more n apparent that he was not going to look at one in isolation of the er. In this direction Mr. Obama provides a very explicit lead in an terview with Rachel Meadow on MSNBC on October 30, 2008, "We ould probably try to facilitate a better understanding between Paki- n and India and try to resolve the Kashmir crisis so that they can stay used not on India, but on the militants." On September 25, 2008, in interview to Journal Arms Control Today, he said that "I will con- ue support of ongoing Indian Pakistani efforts to resolve Kashmir oblem in order to address the political roots of the arms race be- ween India and Pakistan." In an interview with CNN he focused his ttention on the South-Asia and saw a resolution on Kashmir as an im- rtant contributing factor in containing and eliminating roots of ter- rism in Afghanistan. There is all indication that the president-elect is ppointing former USA President, Bill Clinton as his special envoy to gotiate between India and Pakistan a settlement of Kashmir problem. his tasks Barack Obama has described Kashmir as the critical task his administration. Kashmir problem is not a new subject for Bill linton. He has a clear understanding of the issue. During his incum- ncy he called it "most dangerous place in the world" and a "nuclear derbox. While in office he always looked for an opportunity to help

India and Pakistan arrive at a settlement of the Kashmir problem.

Madeline Albright, Secretary of State in Clinton Administr... looked at Kashmir as most dangerous and tragic place in the w... Addressing to Asia Society on 14 March 2000 Madeleine K.

Albright said, "Some of you know that, when I was a young... my father worked as a diplomat at the UN on the problem of Kash... He wrote a book whose first chapter contains the simple but elo... statement, "The history of Kashmir is a sad story." He is now dead... I am old, and yet still this tragic story goes on." This meeting b... India and Pakistan Ambassadors was attended by policy make... think tanks. On 13 December 2003, she favored holding of ref... dum and Plebiscite in Kashmir. Speaking at a Conference organiz... the Hindustan Times she showed deep concern about the plight o... dinary Kashmiri, who she said was buffered between militants o... one side and forces on the other side. Very often they fail to observ... basic human rights. At the leadership conference she in very cate... cal terms told then Ministry of State for External Affairs, Umar Abdu... in reply to his question that she believed "a referendum or pleb... was the best way to ascertain wishes of the people." The United S... has on umpteen occasions declared its Kashmir policy and extend... hand of cooperation to India and Pakistan to settle Kashmir prob... President Bush said, on February 22, 2008, that the US supports... solution of Kashmir that is acceptable to India, Pakistan and the Kash... citizens. In 1996 "a senior official in the US Embassy Islamabad r... in an August press briefing that although the United States does... support the upcoming state assembly elections in Kashmir, but ne... does it reject them. The United States firmly believes that the en... princely state of Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory. It will... main so even after the elections". (CRS 96=730 F dated August 30, ... Reports for Congress). Both the Republicans and Democrats have ... desirous of mediating between India and Pakistan for finding a sol... of Kashmir. But the Democrats have a history of being pro-active... this count. The proposed appointment of Bill Clinton as an envoy ... Kashmir by President-elect is in fact in conformity with traditional K... mir policy of Democrats. In sixties, John F Kennedy made a perso... appeal to the President of Ireland to the effect that Ireland spon...

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...solution on Kashmir in the Security Council reaffirming the resolu... ...ns of the Commission.

The question now arises, how India and Pakistan were going to re... ...nd to proposed appointment of Clinton as an envoy for India and ...kistan on Kashmir. Pakistan has not shown so far any enthusiasm ...out the proposal, instead Pakistan intelligentsia is skeptical about it. ...ough there has not been much response from the top in the two ...untries. The reports from New Delhi suggest that New Delhi is also ...erse to the proposal as it believes that it would internationalize the ...shmir problem. New Delhi apprehensions are not uncalled for, it is ...owly slipping back to the international forums. Prime Minister, ...anmohan Singh mentioned it suo motto at 63 UN General Assembly ...Sept 27, "We are committed to resolve all outstanding issues be... ...en India and Pakistan, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, ...rough peaceful dialogue." The United Nation Secretary General of... ...ed to mediate on Kashmir during his recent visit to India." Pakistan ...shying away from raking up the issue, because its backyard is full of ...oblems.

History says that India and Pakistan have always accepted third party ...diation after wars but have always been reluctant to accept any me... ...tion for avoiding wars. In 1966, it accepted Kosygin, then Prime ...inister of Russia. In 1999 after the Kargil War it was the Bill Clinton ...ho mediated a ceasefire between the two countries. Clinton will once ...ain play a role in Kashmir but from American perspective.

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My Children's Story

Thank you snowfall! Thank you thirty six hours power shutdown! Thank you missing government! It was after decades that I finished a book in one sitting. It was perhaps after my school and college days when I used to buy a novel by authors like Agatha Christie in the evening and finished it by the morning. Today it was no Hercule poirot story that held me glued to a book, enthralled me and made me read under gas-light. It was a page-turner. It was page-turner in real sense.

It was no fiction. It was a truth donned in lucid words. It was story of my children. It was my story. On flipping every page of the book I felt I am the narrator, I am the protagonist, I am the victim, I am the wounded.

It was newest arrival at the Password, Regal Chowk, the Curfewed Night by Basharat Peer published by Random House, India, and priced at Rs.395 that kept oblivious about the heavy snowfall, chilling cold and no-electricity for whole night. I have read scores of books on the Kashmir dispute. I have read honest versions, I have gone through tailored versions and I have browsed through whole untrue stories of the Kashmir dispute that some prefer to call a problem and some pronounce an issue. I might have hardly missed any book on Kashmir, published during the past twenty years. I admired many authors for their honesty and abhorred some for contorting and distorting the facts. The list of those I admire is longer than those I despise for contorting arithmetic facts. Many Kashmir writers told Kashmir story, but hats off to Er. M. Pampori for his "Kashmir in Chains" or Dr. Altaf for his the "Wounded Valley," but they failed to have greater readership. They failed to find space on shelves of book sellers in the capital of largest democracy in the world. Like many Kashmiris, I looked for the day when a Kashmiri would tell his story and it would be read.

"The Curfewed Night" by Bashrat Peer, a thirty one year old journalist is really "beautifully written, brutally honest and deeply hurting" story of me and my children. The book is different from majority of the books written on Kashmir by academicians and scholars during past sixteen years. There is no debate over the fact and the date of the instrument of accession, no recounting of chronology of the United Nations resolutions on Kashmir, there is no dirge on the failure of marathon India-Pakistan dialogues for finding of a solution, there is no discourse over viability of Independent Kashmir, there is no pondering over the strategic importance of the state in the emerging scenario in South-Asia. The book does not discuss the possible solution of the sixty one year old Kashmir problem. It is not scholastic but touches your heart. It is a rendezvous with death. It is reportage, awesome reportage! Reportage with a difference. The author has followed horrifying stories of death and destruction that occurred when he was in school and became part of his psyche. He has in fact reinvented the horrendous tales of rape and molestation of women, murder of innocents, using of his friends as cannon fodder, romance of his friends with guns and painful migration of his school to camps in Jammu. It is breathtaking account of nineties. Every word in the 240 page book is scarlet, sobbing, pulsating and breathing.

The book is autobiographical. It is not biography of an individual but of a whole generation. The writer born in a village in Islamabad district has not only recaptured scenes in his village in nineties when "armed resistance" for an independent state was started by Jammu and Kashmir leaders but also provides us an insight into the minds of young school going children during the period. The author is recapturing his first day at school after the winter vacation, which provides a deeper insight, how the mind of this generation was graduating to politics. He writes: "Our moths teacher walked in the half-empty class. Slowly we grew used to the empty chairs and the talk was of war outside. In the lunch break between maths and English class, my friends and I shared stories of militancy. We began drawing maps of Kashmir on our school notebooks and painted slogans like "war till victory" and "self-determination is our birthright" on the school walls." This reminded me of the last scene of a picture I had seen in my college days in the Neelam

Cinema, the Last Command, starring Anthony Queen and others. The film was about Algerian freedom struggle. The film ended on French soldiers defeating the insurgents in some area and while they were leaving, two school boys appeared on the scene and scrabbled on the walls "we want freedom." Bashrat's recounting scrabbling slogans on the school walls made me believe that children in all nations think alike in similarly placed situations. He narrates hair-raising stories about his encounters with death on many occasions while traveling from school to his home in the village. It is not his story but it is the story of every Kashmiri in nineties. "Children born just before or after armed rebellion", he writes, "had become too intimate with war and fear. My cousin who was born in the early nineties on a day a gun battle was raging outside the hospital, played a game called army militant.

While reading the book many a time I felt Bashrat was Shahid reincarnated. Like Agha Shahid he portrayed pain and agony of Kashmir in prose. He is a novelist who has not woven fiction but truth in poetic prose. He has reconstructed stories of torture that a whole generation suffered in interrogation centers like Papa 2, "most infamous torture centre run by Indian forces in Kashmir." He has reconstructed the stories of a few who have suffered immense tortures in various interrogation centers. Some of them are living a miserable life. Some have lost potency and wrecked psychologically. He has recaptured stories of rape victim like, Mubeena bride, who was gang raped and provides an insight into the lives of rape victims many years after the incident and how those horrendous moments lived with them.

The book very vividly brings out the renegade phenomenon and how it affected the life of Kashmir. The author has looked into the genesis of the phenomenon by taking to the son of slain counter insurgent Kuka Parry. The story of one Muhammad Yusuf, a taught of author's grand father, symbolizes the whole phenomenon. He started as constable, turned militant, turned renegade, became Congress leader with proximity to number one family in the capital and ended, killed by militant. The book stories how gun changed psyche of some Islamic youth and made them to swagger rather walk on roads.

Sharing his experiences in Delhi, the author has very eloquently brought out hard realities how Kashmiri has been ostracized in New

Delhi.

There is hardly any aspect of life in Kashmir during past two decades that the author has not touched in this book. The book needs to be read and re-read by all Kashmiris. Kashmir in US internal dynamics.

I am an optimist. I think all those in a situation like that of ours need to be a bit romantic – yes a bit idealist... and believe in the poetic justice. I look at 20 Jan 2009, as a momentous day. Barack Obama President-elect will take the oath of office. It would believe in the unbelievable, black president in the White House. The day will vindicate dictum, Oppressed cannot remain oppressed forever, and slaves cannot be slaves eternally. Slaves can be some day masters brightens hopes of the underprivileged in the South- Asia and ring bells in the kinfolks and feudal democracies of the sub-continent. The White House will have a new team and new foreign policy advisors. Like many American political analysts I also believe that it will have a nice balance of policy monks, governors and legislators.

I have suspended apprehensions, voiced by many friends globally through their e-mails. I have brushed aside their premonitions and doubts about the Osama's policy towards the South-Asia with particular reference to Kashmir. May be it is too quick a judgment, a summary trial or a premature one. I have started looking for the silver linings in the sky cast with dark clouds. I see a hope in the emerging scenario.

It is not only a section of Kashmiri Diaspora that have opened floodgates of apprehensions, on their websites and e-mails, about the future policies of the Democratic government in US towards Kashmir, but a section of Pakistan intelligentsia too have taken Obama statement on Kashmir with a pinch of salt. Many a Kashmir academicians working in other parts of the world have denounced the statement made by the president-elect during his election campaign about Kashmir as nothing but rhetoric. They don't see much of a hope in the proposed appointment of former USA president, Bill Clinton as a mediator between India and Pakistan for hammering out a solution of the Kashmir dispute. Criticizing the Pakistan media, the establishment and the intelligentsia, Pakistan analyst Shireen M Mazari, in an article in the News (12 November 2008) writes, "Certainly, within the US internal dynamics, Obama will alter things; certainly he is an intelligent and astute human being;

and certainly the man has made history within the US. But we a... ther a part of the US nor is there any particular reason for us to... euphoric or even positive response to the US electoral results... McCain would have been equally negative for Pakistan, Obam... shown no reason for us to hope the US would have a more sa... proach towards its "ally" or sacrificial lamb, in the so-called w... terror."

The question then arises, does Kashmir fit in within the US in... dynamics and if it would be affected by the new President alteri... policies. On the face of it Kashmir seems not of much consequen... the internal dynamics of the only super power in the world. It i... time caught up in the morass of worst ever financial crisis- a... crisis spilling throughout the world. But looking at it in the con... the United States interest in the region, the resolution of the probl... was explained by Obama holds relevance for the internal dynami... his country.

His remarks: "We should probably try to facilitate a better u... standing between Pakistan and India and try to resolve the Ka... crisis so that they (Pakistan) can stay focused on militants," und... edly as observed in an editorial by a newspaper, were not an out... favour to Kashmiri's struggling for right to self-determination, b... his belief that "Kashmir conflict leads to promote militancy a... Muslims of South Asia. Such conflicts and developments work a... the US and, therefore, he wants peace in our region and thus fee... cure. The developments in Afghanistan and on the Pakistan-Afg... stan borders do also indicate that the resolution of the Kashmir di... will find space with the internal dynamics of the United States. ... have been reports about Afghanistan undergoing swift changes, th... courses about return of Taliban to Kabul, the seat of Afghan p... have created waves in the US and some Americans have been dem... ing sending of more troops to Kabul before the Obama takes over ... new president. There are apprehensions as expressed by the New ... Times in its editorial 22 November 2008, "We fear that some N... members may be so eager to withdraw their troops that they wou... willing to trade away the Afghans future. Or that the Afghan pres... Hamid Karzai, may be far too eager to compromise in the hope o...

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...ing his re-election chances." One may not fully agree with Ahmed ...id's analysis in his new book Descent into Chaos about the Afghani... ...India- Pakistan and US interplay having a bearing on the resolu... ...of the Kashmir problem, but in the given situation Kashmir prob... ...assumes more significance in their relations than it had at the time ...Pakistan joining US in defeating the Taliban with the hope that it ...uld help in the resolution of Kashmir dispute. In the words of Ahmed ...id, "Now Pakistan was allied to the United States and United States ...dependent on Pakistan for conducting the war in Afghanistan, the ...tary believed it could force India to negotiating table by stepping up ...cks. It was the same logic that had prompted war in Kargil." (Page ...). The Kargil War that General V.P. Malik described as a surprise to ...tory did bring the two countries to the negotiating table. In the words ...the general who led the Kargil War, "There has been tangible change ...ndo-Pak relations. Knowing full well that people in India and Paki... ...n will not support conflict unless the other side initiates it. New Delhi ...d Islamabad have stopped brandishing swords." (Kargil page 397)

It will be difficult for the two countries to deny that it is but for the ...ervention of the United States that they have come to the negotiating ...le. The question then arises that if the renewed interests of the newly ...cted US government in the USA would make the dialogue process go ...yond the CBM's and bring it to a logical conclusion. It is a reality that ...e dialogue process had reached to resolution stage of the dispute per... ...ps acceptable to India and Pakistan governments but for the lack of ...tesmanship it failed to take a concrete shape. India is wary about US ...sistence of appointing Bill Clinton as mediator. It has hired a new ...mpany with Democratic leanings at a cost of 700000 US dollars and ...kistan equally has also hired news companies as reported by Times ...India for promoting its President Asaf Ali Zardari.

With the Kashmir dispute finding a place in the US internal dy... ...mics the ongoing elections in the state do not hold much water. The ...pport of these elections will not grow beyond an arrangement for the ...ternal governance. The hacks in the print and electronic have cre... ...ed euphoria over substantial turnout of voters in the Bandipora and ...mbal Assembly constituencies. They have been projecting these elec... ...ons as a referendum against the movement spearheaded by the Coor-

dination Committee and a verdict against demand for right to self-determination. The turnout has undoubtedly emboldened political organizations that are in the arena but I believe that looking at Kashmir problem in its global perspective, these election are not of much relevance. The elections have been held in the past also, there have been massive turnouts and there have been total boycotts but the dispute over Kashmir continued to hang as Damocles sword on people of India, Pakistan and Kashmir. There is need for looking beyond these elections. The print and electronic media in India and Pakistan instead of playing up the non-issue should encourage leadership in the two countries to find and bring lasting peace in the region by resolving the dispute amicably much before getting entangled in the maze of bigger global game.

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Anxious World Awaits Change

Kashmir is once again in the spotlight. For past three days it has been leading mention in the international media along with the terrorist attacks in Mumbai. Jason Burke, The Guardian writer on Saturday titled his analytical piece on Mumbai carnage as "Militant suspects have roots in Kashmir conflict", the New York Times writer, Jane Perlez in his analytical piece on Friday saw the Mumbai attacks posing a great danger to India and Pakistan relations. He writes:

"The terrorist attacks in Mumbai occurred as India and Pakistan, two big, hostile and nuclear-armed nations, were delicately moving toward improved relations with the encouragement of the United States and in particular the incoming Obama administration." In these attacks he sees the envisaged US strategy of adopting a regional approach to Afghanistan problem imperiled, "if India finds Pakistani finger prints on the well planed operation." What turn India and Pakistan relations will take in the coming days is difficult to predict at this stage. These attacks have taken place at a time when strategies were being worked for decoupling "Al Qaeda and the Taliban, by engaging the Taliban in a reconciliation process and holding out the offer for an eventual withdrawal of foreign forces in return for a cessation of attacks and suicide bombings and support for the creation of a viable Afghan military," When strategies were being worked out for creating more "plans for regional stabilization". Notwithstanding the debate, the terrorist attacks in Mumbai make the agenda of the new Americana administration harder" and if they lead to yet another impasse of India and Pakistan relations and squander the benefits that were achieved by the two countries during past four years through talks at various levels. The Kashmir problem like the coot, the Dal Lake water bird appears and disappears on the international scene. There have been indications that

the resolutions of the Kashmir problem will be top listed in the re-
gional approach of the Barak Obama government for dealing with
Afghan Crisis. The approach paper that is how I would call the
article titled "From Great Game to Grand Bargain, Ending Chaos in
ghanistan and Pakistan," written by Barnett R Rubin and Ahmed Ra
in the Foreign Affair November-December, two advisors of the Pr
dent-elect sums up as: The crisis in Afghanistan and Pakistan is beyo
the point where more troops will help. U.S. strategy must be to
compromise with insurgents while addressing regional rivalries
insecurities." The President-elect understanding of Kashmir falls wi
the parameters of ending up regional rivalries and finding solution
contentious issues.

The renewed interest of US in Kashmir alerted New Delhi and
intensified its diplomatic initiatives with the Democrats and it equi
infused new enthusiasm in the Kashmir Diaspora organization wo
ing as outposts of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference in the West. T
Kashmir American Council,/Kashmir Centre, the Justice Foundatio
Kashmir Centre London, Kashmir Centre Brussels, and the World Ka
mir Freedom and many others have been endeavouring for past m
years to mobilize international opinion. They have been holding int
national conferences on Kashmir in various parts of the world.
Kashmir American Council as per news reports during past six mont
intensified its activities; it held about a dozen conferences in differ
parts of the United States. In September it held a conference in Colu
bus Ohio on the subject, Kashmir Dispute Setting a Stage. The speake
included: Congressman, Dan Burton, Republican from Indiana; L
Nazir Ahmed, Member, British House of Lords; Ambassador Yusuf Bu
former Senior Advisor to the United Nations Secretary General;
harsh Mander, Country Director, Action Aid, India and Dr. G.N.
There have been seminars and debates in Cambridge University, Geo
Town University, John F. Kennedy School of Government Harvard U
versity, and Pennsylvania University besides couple of protest by
centre outside United Nations Security Council in New York.

One Monday (23 Nov 2008) a conference was organized by
leading British think tank, the Royal United Service Institute (RUSI)
London. The Institute is one of the most important institutions for

g and discussing global problems. The institute was founded in
. This leading forum that won the Prospect Magazine's Think Tank
e Year Award 2008 is seen as one of the most influential institute
aping global policies. The Conference titled "Unfolding instability
shmir, A blind spot in regional security" was important for timing,
e and participation. It was important for the President-elect of the
ed States Barak Obama concept of regional approach for tackling
al terrorism and Afghanistan. The British institute besides inviting
diplomatic corp. analysts and top media men interested in South
roped in people of diverse political outlooks and political percep-
. The panelist included former Army Chief of Pakistan General
angir Karamat, John Cushnahan, leader of European Parliament
egation to Kashmir, Prof. Kamal Mitra Chenoy of New Delhi
aharlal Nehru University, former Senator Shafqat Mahmood, Arif
mal former Pakistan Ambassador of Kashmiri origin, Prof. Sumantra
e of London School of Economics, Prof. Richard Bonney, Chairman
blic Policy Research Institute and Prof. Nazir Ahmad Shawl, Direc-
, Kashmir Centre, London. Despite the diversity of the panelist the
eme song that has been emerging in the conferences whether orga-
ized by Kashmir Diasporas or any New Delhi based NGOs has been
the importance of resolution of the Kashmir dispute for peace in the
region."

From most of the conferences held on Kashmir, it has been tran-
spiring that the various CBMs taken by India and Pakistan during past
four years have global acceptance and these are seen as steps in the
right direction. But what has been causing concern to the international
experts like John Cushnahan former MEP and leaders of the European
Parliament has been the snail's pace at which India and Pakistan dia-
logue is moving. At London he observed "If political stability is to be
established in Kashmir and its wider hinterland there has to be an ac-
ceptance that an exclusively bilateral process which fails to acknowl-
edge the regional and international dimensions of the long running
problem, is doomed to failure." Professor Sumantra Bose, author of two
good books on Kashmir, Challenges of Kashmir: Democracy, Self-de-
termination and Just Peace and Kashmir Roots of Conflict, Path to Peace,
attributes the deep sense of alienation amongst the people of Kashmir

to the denial of their rights. He holds the view that "Kashmir issue could not be put into cold storage for long periods. Prof. Richard Bonney, Chairman of Public Policy Research Organization, London, hinting at potential of Kashmir spiraling out of control, observed in his long paper Jammu and Kashmir: statics and facts, "In Principle, democracy is a wonderful thing but who can doubt that the timetable of the Lok Sabha elections of 2009 once more gives India a reason to do nothing about resolving the Kashmir dispute. (Greater Kashmir November 28, 2008. It is not only the international opinion sees improvement in India and Pakistan friendship as prelude for resolution of the main stumbling block in their relation but even when looked dispassionately at the emerging international scenario, it seems that the post-Bush period would start at a positive note. The "anxious world" undoubtedly awaits a change. There were indications that the change would start with improvement of relations between two key South Asian players by finding ways and means for ending their sixty year bickering over the most contentious issue between them. To see peaceful resolution of the outstanding issues, the two countries will have to fight terrorism in all its manifestations in tandem.

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Mumbai Clouds Loom Large

not the bells that are chiming but it is the alarm gongs that are ging and sending deafening war sounds. In the wake of terrorist at- s on Mumbai, India Pakistan relations have turned sour. The War toric has replaced the peace talks. If jingoism of the satellite televi- channels is taken as an indicator, the mood in India is for having a sive war with Pakistan. There is no denying as very rightly said by me Minister; Manmohan Singh, there is "lot of anger in India against cks in the south Mumbai, commercial hub of India. There is anger nst politicians. There is anger against terror and terrorists.

The anger is justified. Who so ever were the murders of humanity d to be punished and steps to be taken that this is not repeated. But, was puzzling that the news channels were pointing fingers when the my and NSG were still battling the attackers and people at the top re straightway joining the debate. If one goes by the spirit of state- ent made by the new Union home minister, Mr Palaniapp-an Chidam- ram, on Friday stating:" It would not be correct to say that there re no lapses on account of the intelligence and security agencies which llowed the terrorists easy entry into Mumbai", there is every likeli- ood of looking into both at the internal and external dimensions of ese attacks.

The statement made by the Union Home Minister is likely to reduce e level of jingoism on the satellite television channels some of whom ave been fatally whipping up public sentiments both against political adership in India and neighboring country. Many in India have been mparing the attack on the two Mumbai five star hotels with 9/11 acks on the twin towers in New York. The comparison is not a mere etoric but is suggestive of India adopting a posture as adopted by the ush administration towards the world, particularly the Muslims in the

wake of these attacks. There are some saner voices that see danger in such a comparison. Praful Bidwai, a senior Indian journalist and political analyst wrote:

"The 9/11 analogy was wrong for its context, scale and impact. 9/11's casualties were 16 times higher than Mumbai's. They exposed the vulnerability of the US homeland for the first time in 60 years. India have long recognized their vulnerability. 9/11 changed the way the US looks at the world, especially the "Islamic threat." Mumbai won't radically alter India's outlook. The analogy also dangerously justifies the United States Global War on Terror response. But GWoT has been a disaster. It has caused a million civilian deaths, fomented Islamophobia, encouraged terrorism, and spread insecurity. The American people have paid a heavy price through ethnic profiling, intrusive surveillance and the draconian Patriot Act."

The attack on Mumbai has caused lot of bitterness between India and Pakistan. It is not a new phenomenon. The sixty years relations between the two countries are marked by sweet and sour crests and troughs, with more troughs and less crests. Some time back I wrote in this column that India and Pakistan relations have adopted a pattern, there are dialogues between the two countries, and failures of dialogues has caused wars in 1947, 1965, 1971 and 1999. But in the changed global scenario notwithstanding lots of war rhetoric, there will be no direct war between the two countries. It is true that immediate fallout of the mounting tension between the two countries is the Pakistan India trade talks scheduled this month. The talks have been postponed indefinitely. The India-Pakistan trade relations, seen in right perspective, are of symbiotic value. The questions that search answers in the emerging scenario are; what will be the impact of the war of attrition between the two nuclear countries on the Indian elections, how is it going to affect Pakistan's domestic politics and if it could change the concept of regional approach to Afghanistan problem and resolution of Kashmir problem thereof.

The Mumbai terror attack is likely to have an impact on the 2009 Parliament elections. The exposures of Malegaon terror attacks during the month of October and at the start of November were suggestive that these developments would drive the BJP and other right wing

Hindutva parties to the corner but it now seems that Mumbai attacks have carried a coup détat of the Malegaon and Sumjuhta Express terror attacks. It now seems that the opposition in India both the Hindutva parties and emerging Dalit power and other underprivileged forces that are highly emboldened after the election of Barrak Obama will play the Mumbai attacks as failure of the Congress led government in New Delhi.

The Mumbai blasts have caused deep sense of insecurity in Pakistan. It is not only the war talk from New Delhi that has caused anxiety in this nation, caught up in the web of terrorism for more than a decade now, but also their belief gaining strength that they have put a wrong pilot in the cockpit. The war talk from New Delhi has put President Asaf Ali Zardari in the dock. The three statements made by Pakistan President in a week's time; Pakistan has no threat from India, making Pakistan a Nuclear Free Zone and no first strike and sending of Chief of ISI have evoked lot of criticism against him. For not consulting the cabinet committee on defence or taking the parliament into confidence before making these policy statements, he is accused of functioning as a dictator. He is blamed of diminishing the stature of President's office to that of a PR office by so frequently talking to a New Delhi channel much before even sharing his ideas with his Prime Minister.

The Pakistan media is rife with reports of president's office having mishandled a hoax call that could have triggered a war between India and Pakistan. It was reported in newspapers that "a hoax call from New Delhi, allegedly from Indian Foreign Minister, Pranab Mukherjee to Pakistan President in which the caller threatened of war was directly transferred to President, and it triggered a lot of military and diplomatic activity. A red alert was passed on to air-force". The bypassing of the standard procedure on such occasion including verification of the caller and involvement of the diplomatic missions has become cause of anguish among the people in Pakistan. The apolitical and undiplomatic moves and inapt handling of relation with India by the Pakistan President have already sent alarms that Pakistan may be in for yet another change, may be, even a military rule.

Another Important subject that needs to be deliberated upon is, if the Mumbai developments make the president-elect to alter his con-

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cept of regional approach to Afghanistan that envisages resolution of the Kashmir Problem. In its new approach towards the region if one goes by the statements of the President-elect and the concept papers by his aides on South Asia, Barnet R Rubin, Ahmed Rashid, Karl Inderfurth likely US Ambassador to India, the Afghanistan crisis has got dovetailed to Kashmir. The thinking that is gathering strength with the new US team is that "like Palestine's centrality to Middle East Peace, Kashmir was also pivotal for enduring peace and stability in South Asia." Ostensibly, there seems no probability of the new USA government changing its concept of ushering peace in the region and fighting terrorism.

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Slave-Syndrome of Kashmiris

Should I join the chorus? Caught up in Hamlet syndrome, the phrase "should I" hammered my mind very heavily for past many days. Should I join "the chorus of the often repeated quote of Ghulam Muhammad Bakshi, "Forty lakh People of Kashmir are supporters of Khalid-e-Kashmir (Bakshi) - forty lakh Kashmiris are with my rival Sher-i-Kashmir (Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah), forty lakh Kashmiris are with India, forty lakh Kashmiris are with Pakistan, entire population of the forty lakhs of the state are with China or Russia"- I do not known how original the quote is? I do not know genesis of this quote that has been ringing in my mind from childhood.

The statement hurts my ego; I more than often castigated the statement, even rebuked Bakshi using all invectives I had in my quiver of invectives against him. I considered the statement insulting to Kashmiris as a nation having five thousand years of recorded history. I always thought it is insulting to a nation that has given the world mayhana, trika and reshi philosophies. I always thought it insulting to a nation that has hosted Mir Syed Ali Hamadani. I always thought it insulting to a nation that has bejeweled the landscape of literature with master pieces, that has enriched Sanskrit literature, produced more than a thousand Persian poets of repute, made immense contribution to theology and logic. I hailed my people for their higher level of political consciousness.

I do not know? I perhaps have been nursing many false notions about my nation. I have been using all adjectives for its intellect, prudence, scholarship, statecraft, diplomacy, mysticism, religious tolerance, steadfastness and chivalry. I have been culling tales about its erudition and gallantry from the pages of history to inflate my ego and make myself proud for belonging to this great nation. Sometimes I have been

sustaining my ego by reading and rereading what greatest Indian of modern India, Jawaharlal Nehru, said about the land of his ancestors or reciting Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal,s eulogies and laments about the land of his origin.

It was just after the second round of the staggered state Assembly elections a fellow Kashmiri, a friend professing different faith rang me up from New Delhi. Instead of starting with his usual salutations he started his conversation as if I was in the dock: "Did you see Bakshi Sahib is again proved correct. Same people who in July, August and September came out in millions and swarmed like bees on the roads if smoked out of their nests and cried slogans for freedom full throat, danced to the Rigada- Rigada tunes, and made the Hurriyat leaders look taller than their heights, are today forming serpentine queues outside the polling booths, longer than the ones we used to see during our school days outside the "class three" booking office of the Palladium cinema. Now I think you will not now abuse "the great Bakshi" for hurting your ego, but you should make an amulet of his quote and put it in your neck. The trinket dangling on your chest will often remind you about true nature of Kashmiris, it is a race that knows no fidelity to faith or politics." Much before, I would respond to his monologue he ended his call.

The call made me tizzy, excited me, agitated me, it brought spleen to my mouth and had it not been a fellow Kashmiri that scratched my bruised ego... I would have looked at his monologue as jaundiced. Though the political analysts here attribute people not responding in whole hog to the boycott call, given by the Hurriyat Conference and other organizations, to the statements made by President Asif Ali Zardari about Kashmir. There can be no denying that these statements disillusioned the people and made them see their goal hazy and if not unachievable but a bit distant. Second factor, that the observers see for good voter turnout, has been the exploitation of the proximity with Pakistan of the PDP and the National Conference leadership. The leaders of these parties have by and large succeeded in convincing people that these elections will have no bearing on disputed status of Kashmir and would only facilitate in providing good governance. The alleged involvement of the Jammu and Kashmir Jamat-e-Islamia, that apparently is

of boycott call, is seen as yet another cause for massive turnout. have been reports about the Jamat leaders having had meetings Mufti Muhammad Syed and having agreed to support him in the ions.

Whatever the causes the political observers see for the mass turn the call of boycott. It reminded me of many political situations n people did not behave the way leadership wanted them to. They re lured to take different decisions and many times took U- turns n their ostensible political beliefs. To substantiate this maverick or uld I call capricious behavior of people there are ample instances in contemporary history of Kashmir.

In mid-fifties, the hey days of the Plebiscite Front movement, ma- ity of people sitting on the shop-fronts, squatting on the mosque lawns nd at home would shower abuses at the Soviet Union for vetoing the solutions on Kashmir in the United Nations. There was a lot of venom people against the Soviet Union leadership including their lackeys in the state. The hatred in common man against the Soviet Union never ed down. Whenever Kashmir dispute would echo in the United Na- ions Security Council, the dislike against the Soviet Union would touch new heights. In the midst of heated debates on Kashmir two Russian leaders visited Kashmir. The state government at the behest of New Delhi had organized a royal reception for the proletariat leaders. A river pro- cession, which was a legacy of the feudal autocracy, was arranged. The Plebiscite Front leadership had asked people to boycott the reception for the Soviet Role in the United Nations. People ignored this call and converged in thousands on the two sides of the river Jhelum to catch a glimpse of the Soviet leaders. True, there were protests at some places in old city but the reception was sufficient to convince the Soviet lead- ers that people were not with the jailed leadership of the PF but with the leadership that was holding the reigns in the state. A few months later when the PF leadership was released they thronged the streets in hundreds of thousands, raising full throat slogans calling them the scin- tillating stars of Asia, the king of their hearts and even kissed their cloaks out of admiration.

In 1971, January an Indian Airlines plane from Srinagar airport was hijacked to Lahore- this incident created a more dangerous situa-

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tion than the one created by attack on the Mumbai hotels and the railway station. The drama that started on 30th of January 1971 had its "ignominious" end on 16 December 1971 with Pakistan army defeat. In the changed political scenario sustaining the flagging movement's right to self-determination became the only concern with the Plebiscite Front. It asked people to boycott the 1972 Assembly elections. To the disappointment of the Front leadership some organization that apparently demanded holding of plebiscite in the state participated in the elections after entering into agreement with the government. Notwithstanding boycott call by the then tallest leadership, people voted, making them eat a humble pie. And when the Front leaders were released and ban was lifted, t surging crowds greeted them in every village and town forgetting that by not responding to their boycott call they had weakened them and placed them on a slippery wicket.

On 25 February 1975, when Sheikh Abdullah ended his plebiscite odyssey by signing an Accord with Mrs. Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto asked people to observe strike (hartal) on 28 February 1975. There was an unprecedented strike, many independent European historians have called the strike as impressive that it was seen as a referendum against the accord signed by Sheikh. It very loudly suggested that people stood for the right to self-determination. But barely a few weeks later when Sheikh Abdullah after assuming the dwarfed office of Chief Minister with the support from the Congress MLAs, whom he had called "worms of gutter" and had asked people for social boycott, was greeted by tumultuous crowds with only a few voices of dissents protesting in a room inside the hall of a hotel.

These are not isolated incidents of our history but almost a regular feature. Our history is replete with incidents where people's behavior vis-à-vis their political issues became inexplicable. I don't know if any of our political psychologists has done a study to unravel this peculiar and puzzling behavior of Kashmiris.

The question arises, is this behavior rooted in the fear of the authority that has been suppressing people of this land for past four hundred years. Or lack of political consciousness is responsible for oscillating from one extreme to another. Many call it a "crumb-mentality of have-nots," where the people forget higher gains and look for

cessions from people in power.

A young journalist in our office, who covered the elections in the for the first time and visited many villages, has gathered an impression that the serf-subservient-syndrome survives in most of the rural population. It is this syndrome that becomes a driving force to decide political issues. Should I call this behavior of our people what Dr. Joy DeGury Leary in her study of racism describes as slave-syndrome? This is question that haunts my mind. Our political-psycho-analysts need to do a study for analyzing drifting behavior of our people..

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Beyond The Elections

The nightmare is over. The past three months of 2008 were nightmarish, golly they were terrific, curfews, undeclared and declared; chalo and chalo, roko tug of war; sitting indoors; caged for days together, evenings without newspaper, reading weeklong newspapers in one sitting and finding months old magazines refreshing, pushing fingers on the keyboard with more caution and choosing phrases for write ups lest they would not earn more wrath for the newspaper I work for. The do's and don'ts, imposed by the government for the newspapers, hanging over head Like Damocles sword, I lousily and leisurely pushed through my write ups... without treading into "forbidden area, the elections".

Ah! Finally elections were held. They may go in the history as yet other genera of elections hitherto unknown and titled as the "Curfewed Elections" but end of the staggered process brought respite to millions...

The holding of the elections in the state has earned "kudos" to men who made them possible. Some of them may get gallantry awards and some may get, highest awards for life time achievement. Most of the New Delhi newspapers not only pronounced these elections as triumph of democracy or ballot defeats bullet but also as epitaph on the tombstone of the movement led by All Parties Hurriyat Conferences and more than a dozen other organizations. Many see these elections as defeat of the long marches that had seen hundreds of thousands converging on the roads just a couple of months back and made many an Indian intellectuals as Jean Paul Sartre of mid-fifties supporting Algerian war of Liberation. Many newspapers have hailed Chief Election Commissioner N. Gopalaswami's words "We have taken the risk" as imaginative and prophetic. One newspaper in its editorial commented, "India's exemplary Election Commission, state governor, national security adviser and advisors to the governor deserved unreserved applause for ena...

democracy to triumph." One newspaper in its editorial commented, "Kashmiri separatist hawk, Syed Ali Shah Geelani is reportedly pollaxed". Many saw in these elections end of what they term as the "separatist movement" in the state. I may not join the debate with the hawks in the New Delhi media who have asked the All Parties Hurriyat Conference to read the writings on the wall. They commented that "their politics and separatism have no takers now in Kashmir". I may not tell them that it was yet another election held in the state and will be forgotten soon.

True, these elections also will be relegated to the pages of history and forgotten as those of the 1950 under Sheikh or elections under Bakshi, Sadiq, Qasim and Abdullahs. May be they are remembered for sometime more for the way they were conducted. But their dynamics will affect the politics in the state for many more months to come. Who forms the government, who becomes the chief minister is not of much consequences. By the time my column goes to print, picture about future power structure would be more than clear.

These elections have thrown up many issues that, as rightly put by Sajad Lone, Chairman of Jammu and Peoples Conference, in his beautifully written statement circulated at his Friday press conference, need to be "debated". Sajad has provided many moot points for those espousing the cause of right to self-determination or aspiring for total independence or looking for ending of uncertainty in the state: They need to look into why they failed to translate massive show of defiance by people into deliverance "The causes of failure are more than obvious but speaking truthfully about them will not only touch nerves of some but expose many considering many writings in this newspaper as political blasphemy." The APHC and other parties in the context of the recently held elections may like to look inwards and address the questions, if these elections had made them irrelevant, less irrelevant or more relevant.

The 2008 elections in fact have provided political agenda for 2009 for Jammu and Kashmir. The agenda will not be if Mr. X or Mr. Y is the chief minister or how long Mr. X will sit in the saddle and how long Mr. will head the state administration. These elections may generate questions: if they turn out to be repeat of the 1972 elections when the Plebi-

scite Front was banned from contesting the elections and its entire leadership and cadre was detained under Preventive Detention Act (PDA) to draw it into a dialogue with New Delhi. The mass participation in these boycotted elections had not exhilarated New Delhi but set it rethinking, if the mood could be translated in ending post 1953 political uncertainty. Questions may haunt political pundits if these elections work as catalyst for reinitiating the dialogue between New Delhi and APHC and likeminded parties that it talked to earlier. And if an agreement is arrived at, will New Delhi convince the government in power in the state to abdicate office in favor of the APHC or any other potent group as was done by Syed Mir Qasim when he relinquished office for enabling Sheikh Abdullah to become chief minister and ending the twenty two years movement for right to self-determination led by the Jammu and Kashmir Plebiscite Front.

If one goes by mood in New Delhi about the just concluded elections it is not all that euphoric. Other than providing a new set of administrators to the state who could address water, electricity and roads problems, it looks at these elections as strong levers to operate the pro-right to self-determination organizations and brings them on the table on their terms. Reflecting New Delhi's mood, an influential newspaper said, "The message of J&K's demonstrated preferences for the ballot over the bullet is that political solution can be sought and found for any problem, be it bread and butter or identity issue". It wrote, "This is not to say that their mandate is for the status quo." New Delhi is conscious that there are "identifiable strife-weary people" in these organizations that preferred either to remain away the state during the elections or did not vociferously join the election boycott call. These people are pliable. It may sound tomfoolery talking about New Delhi initiating a dialogue with Kashmir leaders while war hysteria on both the sides is mounting, the hysteria is likely play hot and cold till Parliament goes for the elections in April 2009. There is rat race for prime ministerial candidates in all parties. Many see talking war as pre-qualifying qualification for the candidature. The Congress party is yet to decide prime ministerial candidate, if bellicosity is the criterion then Pranab Mukherjee is sure shot to be the congress parties choice. Notwithstanding that the BJP had announced much in advance Advani as its prime

ministerial candidate, with some rethinking in the organization about ding former prime minister Vajpayee from Lucknow, it seems that oice announced about a year back is not final. The Dalit's look at ayawati as their candidate for New Delhi.

Notwithstanding media euphoria about 2008 elections in the state, e post parliament election period will be important while New Deli ill make an endeavor to engage the APHC and other leaders in a dia-ogue. There are indications about Kashmir taking a central stage in the ternational politics. The United States, despite many American opin-on makers visiting India, assuring about not appointing an envoy for ndia-Pakistan for pushing through a solution of Kashmir problem, there re all indications that the new Democratic government in Washington s going to pursue its regional approach for dealing Afghanistan prob-em that carries within its womb resolution of Kashmir problem. It is ppointing former President Bill Clinton as a special envoy for India nd Pakistan. The Daily Mail in its report a few days back said that the ew US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton is making a "hit-squad" of iplomats for the world's trouble spot and Kashmir has been identified s one of them. The election 2008 will be a forgotten entity by mid 2009.

What has been fallout of the 2008 Assembly elections? Instantaeous answer to this question could be that it catapulted the third gen-ration Abdullah to power in the Jammu and Kashmir. The answer could lso be that these elections have thrown up a strong opposition in the state Assembly or these gave the state youngest chief minister. It is not my cup of tea to enter into debate with some lady teachers of Kashmir University who wrote couple of articles on the new chief minister in this newspaper, whether one should pin hopes with younger Abdulla or not and expect a sea of changes in the state. I am not also interested in joining the debate with the skeptics who see the crumbling of the new government inevitable after the Parliament elections. The skeptics may have strong point well-grounded in the history of 1975 and 1987 alliances that stumbled and crumbled under the weight of contradictions within the power sharing arrangement. I do not look at the fallout of the just concluded elections from the power-game point of view; which advisor is shown the door or which of the bureaucrats is dumped in

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some non-descript office or which of the sidelined officer working in some tribunal is brought to the main stream administration or which of the retired bureaucrat gets a coveted position, but I look at it from a different perspective.

I understand that one of the important fallouts of these elections has been setting into motion with full velocity the word "introspection". This word introspection or self-introspection or self-examination or self-contemplation has set into motion a new political discourse that needs to engage the attention of politicians, academicians, intellectuals, political analysts, columnists and journalists.

The word, introspection that was first tossed into air by Sajad Gani Lone, at a press conference after the election results were announced, immediately got a lot of currency. Many journalists and writers taking a cue from the word, asked the leadership, advocating the right to self-determination or struggling for independence or ending of political uncertainty in the state, to see the causes why they failed to translate the mass upsurge preceding the Assembly elections into election boycott in the rural areas. There can be no denying that a substantial number of people queued outside the polling booths in the rural and border areas on the day of vote but it would be too early to say if the election boycott call failed or not. There is school of analyst who has been delving deeper into the statistics provided by the authorities and stating that not more than fifteen percent of the total population voted in these elections. Let me not contradict them.It is the job of the researchers to carry out an in-depth study of the electoral results and analyse the dynamics of the actual percentage. The studies of political analysts apart, a section of leadership that was "against poll-boycott Call", given by Syed Ali Geelani and supported devotedly by the APHC(M) chairman, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Shabir Shah, Nayeem Ahmed Khan, Sajad Gani Lone and JKLF leadership believe that there stand of not giving boycott call is vindicated. Some leaders within the "pro-freedom or separatist" camp have been criticizing their parties for not participating in the elections and furthering their cause on the floor of the house. This question of participation in the elections and furthering the "cause" inside the legislature has an answer in the legislative history of Kashmir. I may not comment on the Peoples Democratic Parties claim of having got the

mandate from people for its document on self-governance and redeployment of troops, but for understanding the power of the state legislature vis-à-vis altering the political status of the state I may not go into history of the pledges made by the National Conference about reviewing the laws extended to the state after 1953 or the fate of the committees constituted for the purpose. To illustrate my point of view let me take the Resettlement Bill passed by the state Assembly in 1980 as a classical example. The bill was envisaged to enable people who migrated from 1947 to 1954 to Pakistan and not to AJK to return and resettle at their native place. The bill was returned by the Governor for reconsideration but it was again passed by the state Assembly. The Government of India on the advice of D.D. Thakur who had remained member of Sheikh Abdullah's cabinet from 1975 to 1982 made a reference to the Supreme Court under article 143 of the constitution invoking advisory jurisdiction whether or not legislation was constitutionally valid or not. This reference remained in the Supreme Court for twenty years and finally it was rejected in 2001. The fate of autonomy resolution passed by the National Conference is yet another case in point and it should set leaders that believe they could alter the political status of the state inside the Assembly, pondering. In 1986, when the Muslim United Front was born and it decided to participate in the election 1987 in a meeting at the residence of Prof. Abdul Gani Bhat, it merchandise the idea that this combine of thirteen organization after being elected would untie the knots binding the state with India. This point became cause of rallying of youth around this combine. I may not delve deeper into much talked about rigging in these elections or the impact of these elections. This subject has been debated by scores of eminent scholars in their works but I have a point that I believe need to be introspected. Why the MUF could not survive as political organization after the elections. Had it survived, it could have filled the void caused after death of the Plebiscite Front. Immediately after the elections it got divided into "extremists and moderates" and then disintegrated. Had this conglomerate survived perhaps militancy on a larger scale would not have visited the state. In 1990 yet another combine the Tahreek Hurriyat was born and died, and in 1993 the All Parties Hurriyat Conference was born. Like the MUF it got divided not only into "moderates and hardliners" but

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many of its important constituents left the conglomerate. In the post 2008 electoral Scenario, if the news paper reports are to be believed, there are possibilities of its further fragmentations.

This whole phenomenon of divisions, fragmentation and lack of coordinated direction for ending up the uncertainty in the state suggests that the experiment of collective leadership or the forum politics has failed on the touch stone of history. The introduction of forum politics out of fear of the void caused after the Indira-Sheikh Accord of 1975 in the struggle for plebiscite was a bad experiment. The forum politics not only proved as a catalyst in the increase of the number of parties but also multiplications of the vested interests.

The concept of forum politics is alien to the struggles for freedom against apartheid; achieving of rights or ending of the political uncertainty. It has been one party and one leader that have led all important movements in the World. The Indian National Congress fought freedom struggle with Mahatma Gandhi in the vanguard. Gandhi in command did not dwarf the stature of Jawaharlal Nehru or Sardar Patel. The All India Muslim League struggled for creation of Pakistan under Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and it did not diminish the contributions made by Liquate Ali Khan or Abdul Rub Nishtar. In India and Pakistan, struggle for freedom, there have been many political side shows but their political howlers got drowned in the dominant voices of the leadership of these parties. In South Africa it was one party African National Congress (ANC) under one leader Nelson Mandate that fought a successful war against apartheid. Same is true about struggles in Algeria, Vietnam, and Cuba or in any other part of the world; it has been one party and one leader that have led these struggles to logical conclusions. In our struggle against the feudal autocracy there was no concept of forum politics or multiplication of leadership.

This whole debate brings us to a fundamental question, if the carnival of leaders and parties yields place for one leader and one party.

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New Political Discourses

These are truly the testing times. These are the testing times for the leadership. These are the testing times for the people. These are the testing times, not for the people in the rural and border areas having voted more enthusiastically than in the previous elections. True, the voter turnout compared to most of the previous elections according to official figures was higher but the question arises should it alter tone and tenor of sixty years political narrative of the state.

Many believe that the voter turnout was on the predicted lines. With all said about these elections they have set some new political discourse in the state. There is paradigm shift in the political parties that believed in finality and irrevocability of the accession of the state with India. They are no more engaged in puncturing the traditional political narrative of the state through their discourses like greater autonomy or talking about doctrine of self-rule as a means for further cementing the "accession of the state," but are engaged in new post-election discourses.

Notwithstanding the National Conference having returned to power in the state under an arrangement with the Congress party, what has been worrying the party top brass is the erosion it has suffered over a period of time. It is historical reality that the bastion of the National Conference's political power was the Kashmir Valley and Muslim dominated areas of Jammu province. Notwithstanding it having emerged as the single largest party in the State, it has lost its traditional strongholds. It has not bagged even half of the seats it had won in 1977 and 1982 elections in the Kashmir valley. Its performance in the Muslim dominated areas of Jammu province has been dismal and disappointing. Its overall poll percentage has shown a nose dive, it has all troughs and no crests. The dominant discourse in this organization is no more restoring the pre-1953 position or reviving the autonomy resolution

adopted in the 1996-2002 Assembly but how the alliance with Congress will survive. Its worry is the history of previous alliance with the party which holds no bright promise. It is engaged in a discourse whether the party has a right to rejoice the victory of having succeeded in passing baton to the third generation of Abdullahs. The National Conference may weep or rejoice over this victory but fact is that there are more blanks in its hyphenated seventy years political narrative today than ever. The changed discourse in party may be a prelude to the wither story.

If 2008 elections are the touchstone in the state's power game then greater pips on the dice have gone to the PDP. Starting from ciphers, with its leader winning an election from his home constituency on umpteen occasions, it has astonishingly won twenty one seats. It rightly feels politically bolstered. The party now seems shifting from its doctrine of self-governance to the fashionable political discourse of the state that at a certain stage was orchestrated by Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and his party. The question arises that if this party dissolves its new found discourse marked by lots of clichés in the popular political narrative of the state as was done by the Peoples Conference in the eighties. The People's Conference was born in 1978 on a similar note as the PDP, a regional party with a regional agenda. The 2008 election results have not changed the tone and tenor of the pro-India political parties but they have set pondering the organizations both religious and political that of late had delinked the peopl's day to day problems from greater political objectives. Some of these parties have been holding marathon sessions that if there was need for creating a new political discourse in the state and adding bajli, pani and naurki to the greater political narrative of the State. Seen in right perspective these exercises are nothing but an exercise in evasions. Instead of remaining captives of the Musharraf dogmas or dialogue with New Delhi or July- September euphoria or "dismaying" November- December 2008, there is need to grapple the emerging developments both in the Sub-Continent and at the global level and identify a new people recourse. Let me reiterate what I wrote some weeks before, 2009 will be a year of change and many political moves of past few years, that initially held promise later on brought disappointment, will become irrelevant and there would be need for looking for new political initiatives.

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (M) top leadership and some other leaders outside its fold had couple of meetings with India's top leadership in the capital. It January 2004 it met Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani and Prime Minister Vajpayee. In 2005 it met Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh. These meetings no doubt were an effort by the APHC to set a thaw with New Delhi and were in tune with its strategies of trilateral talks for paving way for its much cherished objective of initiating tripartite talks for finding an amicable solution of the Kashmir problem. But these meetings did not grow beyond photo sessions. The APHC (M), after the failure of talks with New Delhi, instead of contemplating fresh strategies continued to live with the hangovers of the previous meetings. It in fact eagerly waited for a call from New Delhi. The APHC (M) seen in right perspective in the wake of New Delhi turning a Nelson's Eye towards its overtures had virtually been caught up in the same situation in which Sheikh Abdullah had been caught after opening his cards through Jay Prakash Naryan to New Delhi after the 1968 State People's Convention. Had he not taken a recluse in making door to door elections for the reconstruction of Hazratbal Shrine, he would have become totally redundant. The Amarnath Shrine Board land allotment land fiasco was a God sent opportunity for the conglomerate to make it self-relevant. In the post 2008 election the APHC again seems caught up in a catch-22 situation.

The 2009 is the election year. In all probabilities a new leadership will be at the Central stage. If UPA stages a comeback, in all likelihood Manmohan Singh will not be the Prime Minister. Though it is too early to say if the mantle will be passed on fifth generation Nehru-Gandhi scion or it would be an old aspirant who is not comfortably placed with 10- Janpath. If it is NDA that returns to power, in all likelihood, the Prime Ministerial candidate would be a man from Gujarat, who has complete barons of Indian industry. It would be politically naïve to think about New Delhi talking to Kashmir leadership on important and sensitive issues in such a fleeting political situation.

If the statement of British Foreign Minister,David Miliband, after India and Pakistan visit, is an indicator, Kashmir problem in all likelihood will be catapulted to the central stage of international politics.

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His statement, which has now been endorsed by the British Foreign Office as the official position of the Britain about Kashmir in fact, is subtler endorsement of the new US President's policy towards south Asia.

Instead of being prison of 2004 and 2005 or even 2008, the Kashmir leadership needs to rediscover its political discourses.

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Looking For Sainthood for Holbrooke

Calm has returned. This is how one can describe the post 2008 election scenario in Kashmir. Is this calm real or deceptive? It would be premature to look for a stock answer to this question. Notwithstanding some protest rallies against "diktats" on the people's movement in Bandipora, the town that set mood and trend for the Assembly elections in the state or some demonstrations against continued detention of some political leaders, there is quiet on all fronts. Let me rephrase, political stillness has certainly descended on the valley. If headlines in the newspapers mirror the political situation in the state then majority of the political parties that staged shows after shows in 2008 are in coma or have evaporated from the scene.

The 2008 has seen meteoric rise of the Coordination Committee (CC), a new combine of traders and political parties. Many businessmen and traders who were hardly known in their own fraternity shot into headlines. Some got front page covers not only in New Delhi newspapers and magazines but even in the international newspapers. The CC led movement undoubtedly attracted international attention and Kashmir once again attracted international attention not for war or war like situation between India and Pakistan but for mass uprising in the state. Some analysts were quick to compare the movement led by the CC to some great international political movement that had mobilized the international opinions and changed the course of history. It seemed that the movement, led by the coordination committee, was going to throw up much desired one party and one leader for ending the sixty one year old political uncertainty in the state. The mass appeal of the movement led by the CC that had seen hundreds of thousands of people joining what were called as "freedom marches" had made many a couch politicians nervy. Many a one man party leaders fattening on the politi-

cal uncertainty had seen their dooms day. But belying political ana
like all such multi-party combines in the past; this combine also h
brief life. It died with a whimper immediately after the elections, b
its death it also took a toll of politics of most of the political orga
tions that were its main constituents. It was more of political naiv
have allowed the CC that was born as a mechanism for roping in v
ous sections of society together, a political role for which they ne
had the training nor competence. Most of the political parties
were in the vanguard of the "movement" are in catch-22 situa
Most of the APHC and other leaders have thought it wiser to re
away from the public scene after the polls. Some are in Pakistan bu
convincing leadership of that country about their ideas. Many
preferred to attend to their pending personal affairs.

Notwithstanding this bizarre political scenario at the home
Kashmir continues to be a topic for discussion at the international
The resolution of Kashmir dispute holds key for enduring peace in S
Asia, was the catchword for South Asia policy during Barak Ob
election campaign. It continued to be so after the Democratic can
won the election. The appointment of the former President Bill Cli
as an envoy for India and Pakistan for resolution of the Kashmir
pute seemed on the cards. The proposed appointment of the fo
president did not bring luster on the faces of Pakistan establish
Notwithstanding many international Kashmir experts openly doub
his impartiality on the issue, a section of analysts in his appoint
saw a way forward. New Delhi opposed tooth and nail the appoint
of an envoy to Kashmir. It deputed a battery of diplomats to the U
States to make the new US government amend its approach tow
Kashmir. Highlighting the recently held elections in the state as triu
of democracy in the state, it made it clear that it was bilateral issue
the two countries were already engaged in dialogue for finding sol
of the problem. The President Barak Obama after assuming office,
pointed Richard C Holbrooke instead of Bill Clinton as special env
South Asia. In an article published in the Washington Post on 28 J
ary 2009, Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari welcomed the app
ment of Mr. Holbrooke as special envoy to the region. He wrot
pointing the seasoned diplomat, Richard Holbrooke, says much a

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president's worldview and his understanding of the complexities of
e and stability and the threats of extremism and terrorism. Simply
we must move beyond rhetoric and tackle the hard problems. Pa-
n president had hoped that the appointment of special envoy would
in the resolution of Kashmir. Sharing his optimism with the global
munity, President Zardari wrote in his article: "Ambassador
brooke surely understands that peace in our region can be secured
by addressing long-term and neglected problems. The question of
mir must be addressed in some meaningful way to bring stability
is region. We hope that the special envoy will work with India and
istan not only to bring a just and reasonable resolution to the issues
Kashmir and Jammu but also to address critical economic and envi-
mental concerns."

Two days later the same paper carried a story by Emily wax head-
ed: U.S. Removes Kashmir from Envoy's Mandate; India Exults. India
doubtedly has a reason to exuberate, pruning of Kashmir from the
rtfolio of Mr. Holbrooke, who is known as toughest and skillful ne-
otiator, having earned the nicknam of bulldozer for arm twisting war-
ing leaders to the negotiating table. His appointment as envoy for the
gion had caused lot of "worry" in Indian diplomats and dropping
Kashmir from his portfolio has come as a big comfort to them. The
question arises, will he discuss Kashmir with New Delhi leaders when
he visits India in near future. "There will be no talk on Kashmir with
Holbrooke," reported a satellite channel on Saturday evening but many
Kashmir watchers at the international level look at the pruning of Kash-
mir from the task of Mr. Holbrooke from a different perspective. "I
don't think it has been dropped from his brief," wrote a London based
British historian and Kashmir watcher, "But it is not 'up front' to pla-
cate the Indian government. I still think he will have to try to do some-
thing about Kashmir." Some Washington based South Asia experts hold
the view that the decision not to include India or Kashmir in the official
Terms of Reference of Holbrooke's mandate was not just appropriate,
but absolutely necessary. Given India's fierce, decades-long resistance
to any internationalization of the Kashmir dispute, to have done so would
have been a non-starter for India, and guaranteed failure before the
envoy mission had begun, several."Leaving India out of the title actu-

ally opens up [Holbrook's] freedom to talk to them," argued Philip Zelikow, a former counselor to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who served until December as a consultant for a lobbying firm, BGR, retained by the Indian Government,(FPCable). David Wolfe a New York based keen Kashmir observer in his 1400 words long analytical piece on his blog looked for sainthood status for Mr. Holbrooke's role in the region, he wrote, if he were able to actually achieve an agreement (on Kashmir) all the while tackling issues regarding Afghanistan and Pakistan. David believes that by taking Kashmir off the plate of Amb. Holbrooke, he can apply his zone defense of containment and possible victory in Afghanistan and Pakistan. By appointing former President Clinton to tackle Kashmir, as was suggested during the Presidential general election campaign, he would apply a full court press."

With all disarray at the home turf there is every likelihood of Kashmir emerging as a key issue at the international level and with all reluctance by the contending parties it is going to take centre stage in India and Pakistan relations.

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Prisoners Of The Past

Would we be captives of the past for looking forward? This question has been haunting my mind ever since a friend phoned me up and said that I was prisoner of the past. And my writings on the Kashmir dispute were more entrenched in the past than placed in the present perspective. He believes that I am more than often looking for the birth of "Kashmir tragedy" in the faux pas of leadership first in 1932, then in 1938 and then in 1947. He believes that much water has flown down the Jhelum since 1947 and most of the actors of thirties who for their lust for power or myopic vision added complexity to the Kashmir problem have died. And a critique of them will not bring them out from their graves to rectify their past mistakes. The global scenario has radically changed. The Jammu and Kashmir state has lost the geo-strategic importance that it enjoyed during the cold war. The geography of the sub-continent has changed. The sub-continent no more comprises only of two nation states born out of the doctrine of the two nation theory. A third country was born in 1971 on the basis of language and ethnicity.....

A reader is the best judge, but I very strongly believe that history is a great mentor and the past political mistakes, if looked at dispassionately and analyzed objectively, serve as lodestars and help in navigating through the rough seas of politics. The friend advised that instead of being too much involved in the mistakes committed by the leadership in the past, there was need for being futuristic. The friend asked me why I could not write like Laleh Khalili, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said and Eqbal Ahmed and help this nation to look at things in right perspective about their future. Notwithstanding being miles away from the scholarship of these great men, the friend set me pondering that being prisoner of the mistakes committed in thirties and forties was nothing but the wastage of energies, time and paper.

I was reminded of this argument the other day when I received a book in Urdu titled Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, Personality and Achievements, published by a local publishing house the Wattan Publishers, Residency Road, Srinagar. The book spreading over 326 pages has been written by a lesser known writer Ashaq Hussain Bhat. It is priced at Rs.175.00. This is the third book on Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah that I received during past six months. The other two books published during past six months include Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah – Tragic Hero of Kashmir, written by veteran journalist and writer Ajit Bhattacharjea. I sometime back wrote that the book is written in perspective of India's national interests and Sheikh Abdullah's role in strengthening fabric of Indian secularism. The author is sympathetic towards him. The second book that I received for review was My Years with Sheikh Abdullah (Kashmir 1971-1987) by Ghulam Ahmed, Principle Secretary to Chief Minister from 1975- 1982. The book is not of much a consequence so far Kashmir dispute, its genesis, complexities and Abdullah's role is concerned but it does throw some light on the later period of the Chief Minister, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah.

The third book written by a third generation Kashmiri is critical evaluation of political life of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah from 1981 to his death in 1982. The book is different than many others written in Urdu by Kashmir writers. It has a lucid style without any embellishments of Urdu prose writings. The author has to a larger extent succeeded in communicating his ideas with candidness. It is not a book for average Urdu reader only but opens scope for further research to scholars by generating debate on various facets of Sheikh Abdullah. The paper book has been reasonably priced perhaps for a wider reach.

It is true that there are some very comprehensive books on Kashmir freedom struggle both in Urdu and English, such as History of Kashmir Freedom Struggle in five volumes by Rashid Taseer (Urdu), Political Revolution in Kashmir, four volumes by Shabnam Qayoom (Urdu), Kashmir Fights for Freedom two volumes by Yusuf Saraf and Freedom Struggle in Kashmir by Prem Nath Bazaz; but the new book on Sheikh Abdullah is different. The author instead of relying on secondary sources has endeavored to evaluate life and achievements of Sheikh on the basis of his auto-biography. The author has overzealously worked to

every assertion made by Sheikh in his autobiography wrong. He has painstakingly culled statements made by other actors in the movement to contradict Sheikh Abdullah on every count. The author for instance has quoted a paragraph from page no 229 of Sheikh Abdullah's biography wherein he mentions about his meeting with Dr. Allama Iqbal in 1937. Sheikh claims that this great poet of the East who suggested him to open portals of the Muslim Conference for non-Muslims also for putting up a joint front and this was the only way Kashmir could win freedom otherwise vested interests would exploit the situation. This assertion by Sheikh has been contradicted by many authors earlier. To prove that Sheikh Abdullah's assertion was not in consonance with ideology of Dr. Iqbal, the author has profusely quoted from one of his letters to Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

There are many other touchstones to ascertain the truthfulness of Sheikh Abdullah's statement. To seal this argument it would be pertinent to quote Matlub ul-Hasan Sayyid who stated that after the Lahore Resolution was passed on March 23, 1940, the Quaid-i Azam said to him: "Iqbal is no more amongst us, but had he been alive he would have been happy to know that we did exactly what he wanted us to do."

The Youngman, who has written yet another book on Sheikh Abdullah, has done a good job and tried to look at the enigmatic life of the most towering Kashmir leader from a different perspective. But the question arises, does Sheikh Abdullah become relevant to the contemporary Kashmir situation. Even if Sheikh had lied about Dr. Iqbal suggesting him changing the complexion of his political struggle, does it hold any bearing on the contemporary situation and can a debate and discussion on this take us out of the quagmire and political uncertainty? I very strongly believe that the debates and discussions on the political developments in thirties and forties that many of us see as mistakes of leadership holds the academic interest, but are not of any relevance to the contemporary political situation. Instead of being bogged down by the betrayals, blunders and mistakes of some leaders there is need for creating a new narrative in the tradition of Laleh Khalili, by talking about heroes and not villains of Kashmir struggle. History of Kashmir is replete with tales of heroism by men of valor but no authentic books have been written on them even by men who knew them well.

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Will Kashmir Rise Like A Phoenix

What is in stock for us in the coming months? I have been finding it hard to get my mind round such complex question for past few months. Many a time my mind rebounded with the answer – NOTHING! NOTHING! Nothing... This answer was perhaps coming out of deeply embedded pessimism that has got ingrained in my mind at the threshold of 2009. Is there some rationale behind the pessimism that I in fact share with many of our leaders or is it uncalled for? Looking for a reply for this question some revelations made by former Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri and Journalist Steve Cole in New Yorker and the reports emanating from Islamabad and Washington provide warp and woof for weaving an answer not only for this question but also for the much sought after question, if there would be forward movement towards the resolution of Kashmir dispute in the coming months. Former Pakistan Foreign Minister, Kasuri's interview to Indian television anchors, Karan Thaper and published in the Hindu (21 February 2009) "stirred a lot of interest in his claims on results achieved in the back channel negotiations between New Delhi and Islamabad". He in his interview sounds more than confident that an agreement on Kashmir had been reached between Pakistan President, General Pervez Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh and it had just to be signed. Stating that propriety stopped him from going into details, but he did drop hints about the broader contours of the agreement. In his words: "We divided the whole thing into four bits. One was demilitarization, one was some of regionalization in both parts of Kashmir, then there was some sort of a joint mechanism, there was self-government or something of that nature. These were the four broad ideas under which we were discussing this." It seems that "comfort of Kashmiris" was paramount in the draft agreement. The demilitarization was meant for both the sides of Kashmir. Though no time schedule had been worked out but it had been agreed in principle. Besides self-governance on both the sides of LOC, there was also an agreement on mechanism for linking the two Kashmiris. It seems that nuts and bolts of the joint mechanism had also been worked.

There are many other evidences that suggest that an agreement on Kashmir had been worked. Mr. Steve Coles in his article published in the New Yorker has in fact corroborated the assertions made by Kasuri. Mr. Steve has written that India and Pakistan narrowly missed a historical breakthrough on Kashmir issue based on gradual demilitarization. Cole believes that over a time the border would become irrelevant, an autonomous region would emerge in which local residents would move freely and conduct trade on both the sides of the border. Steve Coles believes that the resolution of Kashmir was the cornerstone of a broad agreement that would have represented a paradigm shift in relations between India and Pakistan: a moving away from decades of hostility to acceptance and peaceful trade. Kasuri has called the failure of understanding and agreement not fructifying as sheer bad luck.

It emanates from the statement that the agreement is shaped on the broad outlines provided by president Musharraf in his four point formula. He was steadfastly pursuing not with the Opposition in his country but had taken on board a good segment of leadership from both the sides of Kashmir. There were indications that he had not only taken "moderate" pro-freedom leaders but even some new generation pro-India leaders also on board. His meeting with the National Conference President and the PDP president were part of his strategy to put pace in giving the agreement with New Delhi a concrete shape.

The agreement seemed a culmination of ten year old dialogue that had started from a couplet by Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Guftagu band na ho, Baat se batt chale (let conversion never stop, Let one thing lead to another) recited by Indian Prime Minister, Inder Kumar Gujral, when he met then Pakistan Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharief in Male. The poetic prescription survived the Kargil war and attack on the parliament. The back channel talks at various levels continued. It was these back channel talks that brought the two countries near to the resolution of Kashmir problem.

The Kashmir resolution failed to concretize, a good section of Indian observers believe that New Delhi at the last minute backtracked. Why Indian government backed off at the end, in the words of Karan Thaper when he asked Mr. Kasuri, was because it lacked courage and conviction. There is yet another question that is often asked, if the proposed agreement was tilted towards vindicating Pakistan's position on Kashmir. To know the truth about the much talked about agreement needs some enterprising journalist to lay a hand on the draft agreement, if there exits any. It is not of much consequence whether a copy of draft agreement becomes available or not but what is interesting is the renewed interest in this agreement much after its protagonist having been relegated to pages of history. Voices are now being raised in New Delhi for reviving the backchannel talks for infusing life in the dead draft gathering dust in Islamabad and New Delhi.

K. Subramanian, known for hawkish ideas on India and Pakistan relation and particularly his approach on Kashmir sounds different when he writes:

"If we are able to conclude a mutually satisfactory arrangement between India and Pakistan, which is also acceptable to the people of Kashmir, we should go ahead with it. But before we do that, we have to be sure that the back channel is not one more instance of running with hares and hunting with hounds." (TOI 26 February 2009). He also advances a suggestion to Government of India that it should approach the US think tank and inform it that a framework for Kashmir settlement already exists.

The question arises, is New Delhi interested in reviving the agreement it hammered with the former Pakistan President General Pervez as United States is stealthily entering into India and Pakistan dialogue on Kashmir as mediator and the think tank in the Indian capital is convinced that it was best way to come out of the quagmire. True, the United States President, Barack Obama who strongly articulated importance of resolution of Kashmir problem to peace in South-Asia, after his taking over as President of US, did not mention Kashmir while talking about his initiatives in Afghanistan Or it did not appoint a separate envoy for Kashmir as was expected. It is also true that at the last minute, Kashmir was dropped from the brief of Richard Holbrooke. Does it mean that

US President no more recognizes resolution of Kashmir imperative for lasting peace in the region or does it mean Kashmir no more figures in his regional approach to war on terrorism? A high level team from Pakistan including Pakistan Foreign Minister and army top brass was holding discussions with Richard Holbrooke and other top US officials. There are indications that it has convinced the US about its concerns on the Eastern borders. This renewed interest in New Delhi, almost a dead framework, evolved for three years on back channel, has more to do with the United States' understanding of Pakistan's importance in its war in Afghanistan. There are indications that in the coming months the back channel talks between India and Pakistan under prying eyes of United States would be reinitiated ... what remains to be seen is, if the draft agreement worked during President Musharraf 's time is reinvented as basic draft for finding a solution of Kashmir problem. Politics is game of stumbling and seeing.

I am not a religious scholar, neither by inheritance nor by training. I have no claim to religious learning. Instead of reading many a "religious scholars", I somehow prefer to read on Islam authors like Karen Armstrong who spent seven years as a Roman Catholic nun and has a global readership. As someone has aptly written, Islam, she makes clear, has not only been one of the World's most important and inspiring religions but basis for one of its most illustrious civilizations.

I don't pay much a heed to fatwah by one or the other cleric. I prefer not to get enmeshed in the maze of "fatwahs" given by the clergy, often contradicting each other. The diktas make me green about the clerics who passed fatwah against Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal and Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the clerics are forgotten but history remembers the three men as the people who shaped destiny of the South Asian Muslims.

Few days back I read a fatwah by a religious leader against "kanijang" (projectile or stone hurling) in a newspaper. I ignored it. Should kanijang, in a small locality be a subject for religious discussion? It has been the part of life in this area for past eight decades. History bears testimony that the ding-dong battles in and around this area have gone for months together in the past. I would love some police officers of yester years like Peer Ghulam Hassan Shah, Ghulam

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Jeelani Pandit and Ali Muhammad Watali writing their memoirs about the area. It would definitely make a good read. Which party has not fought ding-dong battles in this area? The Muslim Conference, the Plebiscite Front, the Awami Action Committee, the National Conference (Bakshi times), Democratic National Conference (DNC of Sadiq) and students organizations have at one or the other point of time engaged themselves in projectile hurling in the area. The workers of the National Conference and Democratic National Conference (mother organization of the Pradesh Congress) have fought bloody battles in the area, now named as down-town. Does this routine what in official parlance is known as "law and order problem" deserve a fatwa from a religious "scholar".

In my understanding of the placement of the Kashmir question in the contemporary global scenario I dismissed the diktat as of no political consequences. Such edicts cannot change the contours of the emerging geo-strategic scenario in the South-Asian region nor can halt a political process that perhaps may change the geography of the region in the coming years. I looked for a similar attitude from the leadership also ignoring the diktat and dismissing it as trivial. I had been nursing an idea that the leadership in the vanguard has matured enough and has its fingers on the pulse of the international politics and understands the deeper nuances of "regional approach to the resolution of the conflicts whether in the Middle East or in the South Asia. I thought that it was conscious of bigger challenges ahead for them after the Indian Parliament elections. Not to speak of ignoring a fatwa on trivial issue I also expected them to ignore the Parliament elections and not to dove-tail them with the Kashmir dispute because this dispute was faster than expected leaving the confines of India-Pakistan bilateralism and re-entering into the global politics as the issue that needs to be addressed for achieving stability in the South-Asian region.

It was a call by a physician friend that made me think about the fatwa. He asked a pointed question if the debate over kanijang amongst our "religious scholars" was going to torment our society as debate over distribution of Nikah Sheeran had done in the past. The debate was whether the Nikah Sheerani should be showered on the Imam or distributed amongst the guests. And if the bones of sheep slaughtered on

Qurban, should be buried deep in the soil or thrown in the dust bin dogs to feast upon. I had no stock answer for my friend. I did not know if the fatwa had enough inertia to swing history back to twenties and thirties of the past centuries when the percentage of education in Kashmiri Muslims compared to today's seventy percent was hardly one percent. I did not understand if Kashmir society in the twenty first century needed an arbitrator like "Governor Deewan Nath" to resolve the dispute amongst clerics over Kanijang. I did not know we were being driven to nineteenth century. I could not answer my physician friend who has a better understanding of Kashmir society than that of mine.

The question by the physician set me thinking if use of slingshots, manjaniq, arrada and qawis al-ziyar by Islamic warriors in war is unislamic. The Cambridge history of Islam tells us that these were the weapons used by the armies of Islam to hurl projectiles at their enemies. (Manjane or mangonel used to be a machine that involved swinging of beam or counterpoise to strike and propel a missile with great force.) It is question that could be best answered by historians, we now have a galaxy of them like Prof. Sheikh Muhammad Iqbal, Prof. Muhammad Ishaq Khan and Prof. Muhammad Ashraf Wani and many others whose specialization is Islamic history. True, the Shah-e-Hamdan Institute of Islamic Studies should have been in a position to come up with an answer that haunts the mind of my physician friend and many others but after thirty years of its existence is yet at graduate level. It perhaps is yet to fix its focal point.

I am a student of contemporary Kashmir history. So more than often I look at the developments not only in the state but even in the subcontinent from the Kashmir perspective. The question that haunts my mind is whether the fatwa is yet another attempt to change the Kashmir narrative. There have been attempts to change the Kashmir discourse in the past also. Sometimes idioms from our ancient history were dug out to deconstruct the Kashmir discourse. Sometimes syncretism of various mystic traditions in the state was used to recast the debates in the states and newer phrases were added to our politics. It was undoubtedly a section of Kashmir academia that played a role in fighting the viruses that were being injected into our society to demolish the Kashmir narrative.

The fatwa debate brings me to two important questions, one, where is our leadership leading us to and, two, if the religious organization should become part of political struggles or confine themselves to the pulpits and endeavor to reform the society of its ills. I leave second question to be answered by more shrewd and intelligent scholars both Islamic and other disciplines. Regarding the first one, I would tell my leaders that politics is a game of stumbling and seeing. I would like to share a quote from Stan Greenburg's new book as was quoted by a New York Times Columnist while writing about challenges before Barrack Obama, " "Bold leaders in tumultuous times always have at least one crash. They never come out of the box and deliver the scale of progress and change their promise, not because they are cynical, but because events conspire against them and they encounter competing power centers. What distinguishes the best leaders, he says, is that they learn from their crashes, adjust, persist and succeed."

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Why Fretting and Fuming

Storm in a tea cup! No! It has not been even storm in a tea cup. I talk about the Parliament elections in Jammu and Kashmir. It is a historical reality that the Parliament elections have not caused even an additional ripple in the waters of Kashmir that otherwise has always remained turbulent.

There have been occasions when MPs from Kashmir were elected unopposed not for their popularity but for people's lack of interest in these elections and sometimes people reached to Indian parliament after bagging just two percent votes. The importance of parliament election in Kashmir polity is manifested in; that the names of M.Ps of Kashmir are not mentioned even in the footnotes of contemporary Kashmir history. I doubt if any one remembers any whose speech about Kashmir in the parliament might have caused a flutter or a flurry in the parliament.

It is a fact that Parliament elections were always a non-event in Kashmir. The only Parliament election that had caught people's attention and imagination in Jammu and Kashmir was of 1971. The people got interested in this election for the Plebiscite Front leadership that often boycotted the election, showing interest in this election for testing its popularity for deciding to participate in the forthcoming Assembly elections. What prompted the Plebiscite Front leadership to contemplate participating in the 1972 Assembly elections? One version was that the Sadiq government had played havoc with the state by extending one after another central laws to the state and eroding all semblances of the internal autonomy. There were apprehensions that if Sadiq gets yet another unbridled term in office he would do away with the State Subject Law and would pave way for bringing demographic changes. The apprehension was not uncalled for, both Bakshi and Sadiq

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had, as has been very aptly said by Alastair Lamb, played a dubious role in implementing New Delhi's agenda in Kashmir for changing the complexion of the problem. But this could not be the sole reason.

The thinking of Sheikh had undergone a sea change after 1968 State People's Convention, more particularly after his friend Jaya Prakash Naranyan publicly told him that his demand for implementation of UN resolution and allowing people of Jammu and Kashmir their right to self-determination was an exercise in futility. It was JP's advice that prompted him to announce in May 1969 that the Plebiscite Front would enter into electoral fray in Jammu and Kashmir. But the results of these elections in August emboldened him that his organization continued to have sway over people. In the words of Lamb, "In June 1970 a second session of the Kashmir State People's convention was convened by Sheikh Abdullah in Srinagar in which the policies of the Plebiscite Front were further clarified. There would be supreme government of the state presiding over regional bodies representing vale of Kashmir, Jammu, Ladakh, Gilgat, and Azad Kashmir. The whole state (with what amounted to federal structure) would either become independent or would join Pakistan." In today's context the resolution at the State Peopl's Convention (1970) seems to be near to President Mascara's four point formula and it even had proximity to the back channel discussions that were going on between India and Pakistan for past four years. New Delhi looked at the proposal that had emanated from the State People's Convention as "implying undermining the validity of the 1947 accession to India of State of Jammu and Kashmir." This caused Mrs. Gandhi to react very strongly at a public meeting in Srinagar in July 1970 and say that the accession of the state was part of India's history and the hands of a clock could not be reversed. In 1970, December, when the Plebiscite Front showed inclination of participating in the election, New Delhi became apprehensive about the possible outcome of the results and intentions of Sheikh Abdullah. The Front was banned under Unlawful Activities Act. It would be too naïve that the ban of the Front was imposed on the advice of the State administration, the fact was that New Delhi had become apprehensive lest the outcome of these elections is not played up at the international level as vindication of the Fronts latest clarified stand at the State People's Convention.

It was in this context that 1971 Parliament elections attained symbolic importance for the "resistance movement" in the state. In this election the Front supported Shameem Ahmed Shameem and to make people understand the symbolic importance of the election Maulana Mohammad Masoodi coined a very intelligent phrase "Khamba" (Elector Pole). He asked people to vote for "Khamba" to convey to New Delhi that Plebiscite Front despite the ban continued

to have sway over people of the state. It has been tom foolery of some contemporary historians to state that the Front asked people to vote for symbolic Khamba out of vendetta to defeat Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad. Seeing an alliance between Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq and Front leaders in defeating the official candidate of New Delhi would be reading too much in it.

It would be too naïve to draw a parallel between the 1971 and 2009 elections. The two are not even distantly proximal. The 2009 Parliament Election in Jammu and Kashmir is just routine exercise like any other elections held in the state in the past. The questions arise, should this election engage the attention of the leadership espousing the cause and right to self-determination. It would be their naivety to co-relate the Parliament election on six seats in the state to the status of the Kashmir dispute. The leadership by fretting and fuming on these elections and dovetailing them to Kashmir Problem are adding importance to otherwise a totally non-important affair that has no bearing on the status of Kashmir problem. The parliament election of the state are not going to affect the way Kashmir problem is steadily and stealthily leaving the confines of bilateralism and entering into international discourse. The leadership needs to understand the dynamics of the international mood about the dispute that had been very candidly epitomized by Howard B. Shaffer, a former top State Department Official, who categorically asked the Obama government to prevent tension in Kashmir as it would complicate US security interests in Pakistan and Afghanistan. And that is really the major basis for concern, rather than looking at the rights and wrongs of the Kashmir issue. It is true that

Kashmir, is not part of agenda of the US envoy to Pakistan and Afghanistan, yet it is equally true that his recent statement in New Delhi about India being a South Asian leader caused a lot of flutter in Paki-

stan and some Kashmir organizations also expressed their anguish over his statement. His statements in Islamabad and New Delhi might have caused annoyance in Islamabad but though intended to placate Indian sensibilities they have not made India also happier. Mr. Naresh Chandra a former Ambassador to the United State told New York Times, "While equating Pakistan as a pure victim, we don't buy." It is more than evident that Mr. Hoolbrooke has been pursuing Kashmir problem vigorously with New Delhi. One could appreciate his meeting Indian Foreign Secretary but what prompted him to meet Satinder Lamba who has been back channel negotiator on Kashmir for past many years. To conclude this column let me reproduce observations made by a New Delhi based journalist friend whose forte has been foreign officers.

"Richard Holbrooke's visit had a double purpose.The U S wants greater involvement of India in the new Af-Pak policy.Kashmir is also on his agenda unofficially.But India is very sensitive to this issue, particularly when election process is underway. It can provide enough material for the opponents of the Congress.

The government officials have clearly conveyed to him that resumption of dialogue is not possible immediately. The matter will be handled by the new government.

About ten days back, foreign secretary Menon said that third party intervention never helped in the resolution of indo-pak issue. He said that two countries achieved progress when the bilateral peace process was started in 2003."

In this emerging scenario the question arises, should Parliament elections in the state make leaders fret and fume and correlate them to Kashmir problem. Steering APHC (M)? Splitting hair, that is what columnists and news analysts are blamed of doing. Is it true that the columnists split hairs or in reality they cut ends of the split hairs to prevent them getting damaged and even dying? This question bothered me when on last Monday a doctor friend, a good political analyst and writer in his own right on reading my column told me not to split hairs about Moulvi Abbas's faux pas that had caused wide spread demonstration in many parts of cities and prominent districts of Kashmir valley.

The acting Chairman of APHC after three day marathon meeting of the Executive Council and the General Council made some statement

rding the policy of the conglomerate about the ongoing Parliament tion in the state. I read and reread the text of the Urdu statement ulated to the press, to me it read first like reading Molly Blooms loquy in James Joyce's Ulysses, but that has not vagueness in it but one's grasping power and patience, but the statement by Hurriyat so verbose that it in fact said nothing substantial. I think it was not statement of Abbas that irked youth but his body language, that ligerently repugnant, that provoked protests. However, with all its bosity this statement earned a dubious distinction to the acting chairn of APHC and member of the executive of being the first "prodedom" Kashmiri leader whose effigy was torched amidst thunderous logans in many places in old city. I don't remember having ever witssed during past twenty years effigy of any Kashmir leader being rched and then trampled down under boots with contempt. True, I ve seen many flags being burnt and dummies of the Israeli and Ameriin leaders set on fire whenever Israel attacked Palestine.

Seeing an effigy of Kashmir Hurriyat Conference leader burnt appeared to me like writing a new introduction to the contemporary Kashmir history. The anger in the eyes of the youth who burnt these dummies set me thinking. Who are these youth with eyes burning bright like William Blake's Tiger? It set me thinking. The brightness in their eyes cannot be the borrowed one, it is warmth in their hearts and anger in their brains that makes their eyes bright and burning. From the local television channel coverage one could make it out that it was the post-ninety generation, a generation born and brought up amidst rattling of the Kalashnikovs and machine gun fire that had converged on the roads and was raising slogans against the Hurriyat leader, burning his dummy and battering it under their feet. On seeing the television footage, my mind denied to accept the theory given out by a top leader that the demonstrations against the acting Chairman of APHC (M) were the handiwork of agent provocateurs.

The statement, other than provoking youth to come on the streets and raising slogan against the acting APHC chairman raise many questions. One, can it be called a faux pas, two, if the statement was inadvertently made, three, if it was made with the intention of seeing how deep the waters were for taking a big plunge, fourth, if it was addressed

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to the power galleries at New Delhi or it was sheer tom foolery. More than words it was the contemptuous body language of the acting Chairman of the APHC (M) that spoke volumes and provoked a revolt within its ranks and made many a political observers in the sub-continent predict disintegration of the multi-party combine. A commentator on the Dawn News channel connecting the statement of the acting APHC (M) to the plunging of Sajad Lone into the election pronounced that the statement suggested APHC's changed mood for participating in the elections and it could be prelude to what he described as end of separatist movement in Kashmir.

The question arises, if the statement made by Moulvi Abbas is his personal view or it is thinking within the APHC Executive that he has expressed very crudely. It is no enigma that Abbas views are shared by few others in APHC(M) Executive. In his 710 word article tilted Election a Non Issue, published on his bloc, Prof. Abdul Gani Bhat enables one to understand the mindset of a section of leadership within the APHC (M). He writes let me quote:

"Jammu and Kashmir is never a homogeneous political entity. The contradictions in terms of geography, history, culture, language and even in terms of political aspirations demand that a sensible approach is adopted while dealing with any given situation in the region. Whether a boycott is called or not the voting happens. The people in Jammu division both Hindus and Muslims vote. Ladakh is no exception .This constitutes the half of the state. Look at Kashmir, the people in border areas under the shadow of soldier's guns vote. As far the planes, the pro-Indian political parties participate in the electoral process as a matter of policy and capture votes irrespective of the fact, whether the turnout is low or high. What should concern a political leader, representing the dispute, with his two eyes wide open that if he calls a boycott and voting happens, he lands himself , where? The situation being what it is, the voting happens, boycott calls not withstanding. Does he win or lose? The answer lies where it does. As a matter of fact he losses the battle"

I am not to join a debate with "philosopher leader" of the APHC (M), if boycotting the elections is losing the battle but what sounds more intriguing is his statement that Jammu and Kashmir is not ho-

genous political entity. In more than one way he suggests that the tion as recognized internationally is not possible for the state. One y ask him which country is homogeneous, is India homogenous, is kistan homogenous or which state within India is homogenous. Had ndhi thought of heterogeneity of India, he would have never dreamt Swaraj. Boycotting election, as has been written by many in the past ot new phenomenon in Kashmir. It was born along with the birth of ja Sabha; the National Conference was to boycott the elections and ght by the Muslim Conference. Ever since organization fighting for ht to self-determination has either been boycotting the election or t participating directly. The Dawn Commentator in his analysis was t wrong that a split in the APHC (M) was distinctly visible. It may be noying but is truth that there is a wider gulf in the perceptions of ecutive and General Councils of the APHC(M).

It was for the first time after the APHC breaking up into two factions in the wake of 2002 election that the APHC (M) was confronted with yet another threat of suffering another split. Ostensibly, the APHC(M) executive were not in disagreement with statement made by the Acting Chairman at the press conference but one or two members of the executive were annoyed with his body language at the press conference and dragging in the United Jihad Council into the controversy. However, the revolt was brewing up in the General Council of the organization. Seen in the right perspective the forte of the APHC (M) is not all powerful executive council but the General Council that comprises of organizations headed by people who could claim to be the real stake holders of the ongoing present movement for right to self-determination. Some of the members of the General Council have real claim of being founding fathers of the renewed struggle for freedom or right to self-determination. There is simmering discontent in the General Council of the organization that can be addressed only by restructuring the conglomerate and making it into an organization, with definite organizational structure where political acumen, public acceptability and commitment to organization constitution should be the only criteria. True, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Chairman APHC (M) succeeded in controlling the damages done by the acting chairman. He succeeded in subverting the tide that had the potential of sucking the APHC (M) in

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its whirlpool... But it should not lead him to any complacency but set him pondering on the much debated topic, which is, bidding adieu to the forum politics that I prefer to call as drawing room politics.

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Looming Shadows of Elections

Thanks elections! I think we must all thank elections: the scribes and columnists for providing grist to the mill of writing; the cub and senior reporters for getting an opportunity of having first ever interface with political leaders of different shades and hues; sizes and statures and ideologies and outlooks. I must thank the political parties contesting the elections for providing an opportunity of dishing out newer slogans for attracting the electorate and providing them an opportunity for reaching to the people in farthest areas with promises of roads, water and jobs for first and last time.

Truth is that the elections have not been and are not a "non-issue" in Jammu and Kashmir but they have always been full of political vitality that has played a role in giving the state politics new discourses, shaping the events and casting political parties in new roles. It has been but for dynamics of the elections that has sustained the political movements in the state. It is history; all elections in the state right from 1950 whether boycotted or contested by political parties have proved an important watershed for the state polity. Some of the elections like that of 1950 and 1956 brought Kashmir dispute under sharp international focus and placed it before the comity of nations as an issue with international ramifications. These elections caused the United Nation to pass more resolution on Kashmir reaffirming its earlier resolutions passed in 1948 and 1949. These resolutions called for holding of a plebiscite in the state under its aegis for deciding the future of the state. The 1950 elections by all stretch of imagination were farce as all the members were elected without contest. Even the then Governor General Rajgopalacaharya on being presented the results of the elections by a state government official is reported to have commented: "It is accepted that the organization of Sheikh Abdullah and he himself enjoy undis-

puted popularity but could not you rig the election in a few constituencies to accommodate a few opposition members so as to make it appear elections." (Quoted by G.N. Gowhar in his book on elections). Notwithstanding Indian attitude undergoing a change and Jawaharlal Nehru in his statement in Indian Parliament on 29 March 1955 having stated that, Pakistan was out of court for its failure to honor obligation enjoined upon it by the UN resolutions, the 1956 election provided yet another opportunity to Pakistan for raising the issue in the United Nations. The 1956 elections brought once again Kashmir dispute under international focus and resulted in the adopting of a resolution by the United Nations on 24 January 1957 restricting the role of the State Assembly stating that " any action that Assembly may have taken or might attempt to take to determine the future of the entire state or any part thereof or action by the parties concerned in support of the action by the Assembly, would not constitute a disposition of the State in accordance with the resolutions of 1948 and 1949." Seen in right perspective the 1956 elections and actions taken by it in the words of P.L. Lakhanpal brought once again Kashmir to the Security Council after "five years". There is hardly an election in the state that has not proved eventful in one or the other way. The 1972 Assembly elections that was boycotted by the then most popular leadership of the State had found many supporters for it in New Delhi. Many a newspapers had denounced this election that had seen Congress returning to power in the state as "weeping over victory". These elections had seen the Jammu and Kashmir Jamat-e-Islamia tearing apart its cloak of religious organization and emerging as another organization joining the electoral politics in the state. These elections changed the mindset of both New Delhi and Kashmir leadership and proved catalytic in ending the twenty two years movement for right to self-determination led by the Plebiscite Front. True, the 1977 elections saw triumph of Sheikh Abdullah and his party but it would be distorting the facts to say it was vote for the 1975 Indira-Sheikh agreement. It was in fact a vote for reaffirmation of Kashmir identity and rejection of the assimilation of state politics in the Indian mainstream politics that was then represented by the Janta Party. These elections not only saw rejection of the politicians that had jumped over to the Janta bandwagon but also ensured but also relegated them to

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kyard of Kashmir politics and many a stalwarts of yester years like ulana Muhammad Syed Masoodi, Prem Nath Bazaz, Ghulam hudin Qara and many others were sent to the footnotes of Kashmir tory. The 1987 is now internationally recognized as an important tershed of contemporary Kashmir history. It was not only a transion to the "armed resistance" but also breathed a new life in the reival of the movement for right to self-determination. This election proided a new class of leadership to the state. Many a historian have rightlly woven Kashmir story of the past two decades around these elecons.

The 2002 elections are yet another important milestone in the state olitics. There are many ifs and butts attached to this election, one, why arooq Abdullah did not contest these elections, two, why the National onference despite being single largest party did not claim for formaion of the government, if there was tacit between New Delhi and the National Conference for selling these elections as credible before the international community. This election not only saw new faces in the corridors of power but also caused vertical division in the All Parties Hurriyat Conference. It divided it into "moderates" and "extremists".

Let me repeat, it is history that there is hardly an election in the state that has not caused ripples and waves in the state politics. The massive turnout in the 2008 elections not only saw return of scion of Abdullah to power but caused a lot of disappointment in the Hurriyat Conference leadership. A section of it talked of rethinking and introspection that found a louder expression in the statement issued by the acting Chairman of the conglomerate calling elections a "non-issue". It was but for the resentment within its ranks that caused retracing of its steps.

Now when curtains have almost been drawn on the Parliament elections there are couple of questions that haunt the minds of political observers. One, if the political parties who have been endeavoring to retrigger the "movement for right to self-determination" by talking of self rule are going to plunge into it whole hog in the coming months, two, if the two factions of the Hurriyat Conference and other parties after having conjoined their calls for the boycott call, get welded and emerge as a formidable political organization and three, if the irrita-

tions within the coalition partners aggravates or softens. The 2009 elections will trigger changes in all the political parties whether in fray or out of it. And wait and watch is better options than forecasting the changes.

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Kashmir Expectations and OIC

Talk shop! Prattle Box. These are some of the phrases used by critics against the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). These phrases are lavishly used by writers, journalist and scribes in the Muslim countries against the organization for not coming up to the expectations of the Muslim community in general and the intelligentsia in particular. Many Muslim intelligentsia have been looking for the UN role for this organization in arbitrating solutions of the disputes that have been causing concern to the Muslim World. I may not look into the possibility of this organization working as keel for steering global relations; though it has the strength of changing the dynamics of international relations but I will be looking into the role it has been playing vis-à-vis Kashmir.

The organization is now forty years old. The decision for establishing the organization was taken at the historic summit in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco on 25 September 1969. The reason for setting up this organization was the criminal arson on Al- Aqsa Mosque in Occupied Jerusalem. The organization has a membership of 57 states spread over four continents. It is second largest inter- governmental organization after the United Nations. The setting up of the OIC was a dream of King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and visionary Pakistan leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to bring under one banner Muslims of the world not only to take on challenges of Zionism and imperialism but to see the Muslim World emerge as one of the principal players in global politics. Many contemporary political analysts have seen cause of assassination of King Faisal in the birth of OIC. Some see the proactive role played by Bhutto in shaping the OIC as cause of his murder on trial. It was the idea of Muslim Block to counter the Western powers piloted by him in the second OIC summit held in Lahore in 1974 that made the West wary about the man whose brilliance was endorsed by Henry Kissinger in these

words, ""I found him brilliant, charming, of global stature in his perceptions ...he did not suffer fools gladly .Since he had many to contend with, this provided him with more than his ordinary share of enemies".

The OIC despite suffering international conspiracies has undoubtedly emerged as an important organization in the world. Notwithstanding it being an organization representing one third of the world population, it has not been effective in furthering the cause of the Muslim World or resolving the important disputes concerning the Muslim World. Some experts on the global Muslim affairs see in the failure of this organization as symbolically collective failure of the whole Muslim community in the world. Some see the cause of failure of this organization in the structure of the organization, lack of its physical and economic structure, which could serve as an impetus for accelerated and productive action. The organization has failed to grow as an all embracing organization that could effectively channelize the resources of the Muslim countries for scientific and technological advancement. Some scholars have seen lack of real democracy in many Muslim countries as one of the major reasons for holding up growth and progress of the organization. Some see vested interests of some despotic kings and Sheikhs as cause of its ineffectiveness to resolve the disputes confronting the Muslim world on the basis of justice and fair play. The OIC might have failed on many counts but it has succeeded in keeping up the debate on the problems such as that of Palestine, Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq and Kashmir. Kashmir problem that was taken to the United Nations on 1 January 1948 dominated the debates of the Security Council for two and half-decades. It virtually lost this forum in 1971 after India and Pakistan signed an agreement and decided to resolve the dispute bilaterally. And after 1971, Kashmir problem has rarely been mentioned on the floors of the Security Council, except in extraordinary situations like India and Pakistan carrying out tests of their nuclear devices and the international community voicing concern about Kashmir becoming a nuclear flashpoint between the new entrants to the nuclear club. Or during situations like the Kargil war when international community asked India and Pakistan to find an amicable settlement of the dispute. It has been by and large human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir that have found an echo in many international

manitarian organizations or the European Union but there have not n any marathon sessions in any international forums for the resolu- of the problem after 1971. It in fact has been only in the OIC sum- t meetings where resolution of Kashmir problem has been debated d discussed along with other problems confronting the Muslim World. ue it has been in the wake of the 1990 mass upsurge in Kashmir that ited States and other European countries renewed their interest in shmir and reiterated their stand. In October 1993 US Assistant Sectary of State for South Asia Robin Raphel in a briefing to correspondents in Washington reiterated the US stand on Kashmir and said: "We iew Kashmir as a disputed territory and that means that we do not ecognize the instrument of accession or Kashmir an integral part of India." Notwithstanding New Delhi reacting very strongly to the statement, the statement was repeated subsequently, on several occasions with US administration officials reiterating that it considers entire State as disputed territory.

However, Kashmir problem continued to be a cause of concern at most of the OIC summits. In 1994 a delegation of the APHC headed by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq was invited to the Seventh Islamic Conference in Casablanca. The organization accorded observers status to APHC in 1996. There has been hardly any summit meeting of the OIC where Kashmir Problem has not been equated with other problems confronted the Muslim Conference. The organization in its Oct 2008 summit in Kazakhstan adopted a resolution supporting the right to self-determination for people of Jammu and Kashmir. It also endorsed the 1948 UN resolution mandating a plebiscite in the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir as it stood on 14 August 1947. The OIC has been the first international forum where Kashmir leaders have been invited as an independent entity to talk about the Kashmir problem that has bedeviled India and Pakistan relations.

Since Saturday 23 May 2009 three day brain storming session of 36th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) of the OIC member countries is being held in Damascus, Syria. Besides the APHC some Kashmir Diaspora organization like Kashmir American Council, Washington and J&K Justice Foundation, London have been invited to the conference. Kashmir Diaspora leaders Dr. G.N.Fai of KAC and Prof.

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Shawl of Justice Foundation are attending the conference.

The conference has assumed added significance for it being held about a week before US President Barak Obama is to address the Muslim world from Egypt on 2nd July. There can be no denying that the US president Barak Obama has been undoing many a anti-Muslim Bush policies in the interest of his country and has embarked on the path of reconciliation towards the Muslims. The OIC leadership has an important role to play in this hour of transition and involve the United States in a big effort to find a solution to all the problems confronting the Muslim World. The Damascus conference has been deliberating upon "the future of the relations between the Muslim world and the United States but it could play a role in enabling the US President to be more focused towards the real problems that have worked as incubators for spawning "extremism"

In his above 4000 word statement, the Secretary General of OIC Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, has endeavored to highlight the unresolved issues and how the organization was seeing the major unresolved issues like Palestine, Iraq, Kashmir, Afghanistan and Somalia. Mentioning Kashmir, he said in his statement, "Regarding the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, the tense situation is still at a standstill due to the failure to implement the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. My special envoy to Jammu and Kashmir has paid a visit to both Islamabad and Muzzafarabad to discuss developments in this connection."

The OIC support for Kashmir so far has been symbolic and most of Kashmir leaders have been expecting the organization go beyond symbolic support and see it playing the role of the UN in the resolution of Kashmir. Is it expecting too much from this organization? Challenge for Leadership India after a gap of twenty five years got a very stable government. Ostensibly the new UPA government with Dr. Manmohan Singh in the cockpit seems very firmly entrenched for next five years. Though, India has many a challenges but the message that emerged from the 2009 election has been that people want stability and good governance, not the politics of caste and religion.

The Pakistan situation is very fragile with anti nation state forces phrased as Taliban bent on bringing in death and destruction in the name of religiosity. These killers are showing no compunction in mur-

dering hundreds of Muslims in a country that was founded by Quaid-e-Azam as home for the Muslims of South Asia. Though there are reports about Pakistan army having succeeded in pushing these forces to desperation but the fall out of this war has been colossal. More than three million people have been so far internally displaced. It is internationally recognized fact that the Pakistan army for its superiority is certainly going to win this war in shortest span of time but there can be no two opinions that it is going to leave behind a blazing trail of miseries and problems. The question arises if this diametrically opposite political situation in the two countries was going to throw up a new "Kashmir Idiom"? This question generates a whole range of questions. If it throws up a idiom, how will the new idiom read like? Will the new idiom border on maintaining the status quo or it will empower New Delhi for dictating a solution for the sixty two year old problem. If a new Kashmir idiom is born, will it change the political narrative of the state?

So far the dominant political narrative in the state has been resolution of the Kashmir dispute through peaceful dialogue between India and Pakistan and meeting the genuine political aspirations of people of the state. This in fact with a little variability has been the dominant political narrative of all the political parties espousing the cause of right to self-determination for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. As against this the dominant and most favorite theme of most of the pro-India political parties in the state has been that the state was an integral part of India and no power on earth could undermine this relationship. And if there is a dispute it is over Azad Kashmir, the Pakistan controlled part of the state. This in fact has been the stance of all the pro-India political leaders whether belonging to the Indian mainstream political parties or the regional parties. The National Conference reborn from the womb of the Plebiscite Front in 1975, in its initial years in power often maintained that there was no dispute over the accession of the state with Indian union. However, the centre-state relation and devolution of power need to be scripted a fresh in tune with the 1975 Kashmir Accord. This stance lost most of its steam immediately after the Congress Party withdrew support to the Abdullah government. Other than its political gospel of greater autonomy or restoring pre-1952

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position when the relation of the state with Indian union were confined to Defense, Communication and External Affairs and India's stand on the question of accession was that it was subject to ratification by will of people, many other factors helped the party to win the 1977 elections. Sheikh Abdullah's illness did create a sympathy wave for the party but suspicion about the intentions of the Janta Party integrating the state with Indian union proved catalytic in transforming the sympathy wave into victory of the party. The 1977 elections in fact were indicative of the post-1971 political mood in the state, the National Conference won against the Janta Party in the Muslim dominated areas only. Though the party was conscious that its political constituency was Kashmir valley and the Muslim dominated areas of Jammu and Ladakh but still it failed to live up to its promise of restoring the pre-1952 position in the state. To test New Delhi's mood the party passed the J&K Grant of Permission for Resettlement in March 1982, for enabling people living across the LOC to return to their homes. The bill was returned without assent by the State Governor. The return of the bill was denounced as an "insult of the house" by Abdul Gani Lone. The house however again passed it in September 1982 but President of India referred it to the Supreme Court. Although NC decided to lie low on the bill yet it was shown the door. This party in fact lost all its trappings of regional politics after the 1987 elections and its political stand on Kashmir dispute was like any other unit of the Indian mainstream political party in the state. In fact many statements made by its leadership in the wake of developments in the state were dangerously provocative. The 1996 however saw a different National Conference that talked of hot pursuits against Pakistan and bombardment of Muzzafarabad, Rawalkot and Mirpur. So was true of other pro-India leaders heading Indian mainstream parties in the state.

The turn of century saw a total shift in the stance of most of the pro-India parties in the state more particularly regional parties. Their phraseology underwent a total change, the much trumpeted phrases like "Kashmir was integral part of India and no power on earth could change it" evaporated like ether from their vocabulary. Their approach to Kashmir dispute changed and most of the leaders who vowed about finality of accession started talking what was described by many as "soft-

ratism". It is not that their mind set about the finality of accession nged but they tried to attune themselves with the change in mood in Delhi. The late nineties saw a perceptible change in New Delhi's od about Kashmir. It in fact was Prime Minister Vajpayee who not y emerged as harbinger of change in New Delhi's approach towards mir dispute but made some reconciliatory moves towards the reso- on of the dispute. Many had started looking as a statesman in him had the capacity of resolving a problem that had eaten into vitals ndian economy. True, the Kargil war did dampen his initiative for lving all disputes with Pakistan including that of Kashmir but it for his innate desire of forging peace in the region that he very ccessfully breathed a new life in his initiatives in 2002. The mood of conciliation set by him survived even with the UPA government. hough many CBMs were initiated but no substantial work was done r resolution of the problem. It in fact was this changed mood in elhi that has been instrumental for changing the stance and postures pro-India regional parties in the state. It was this change that saw ost of those politicians who talked of hot pursuits mellow down and g in symphony four point formula song with former Pakistan Presi- ent General Musharraf.

The question arises that in case a new Kashmir idiom is born and ew Delhi stiffens its stand on Kashmir how will these political parties ehave. In all likelihood the National Conference will not rock its boat talking about its autonomy resolution, so will not other parties di- inish their prospectus by talking louder about the demilitarization d self-governance. It goes without saying that most of Pro-India re- ional parties tailor their political agenda in tune with policies at New elhi. It should not be shocking if we see a paradigm shift in all these rties.

In case a new Kashmir idiom is born it will be a real testing time for e leadership espousing the cause of right to self-determination. It will ve to understand the dynamics of the situation as obtains in the sub- ntinent and its import on ending of political uncertainty in the re- on. The stable government in New Delhi and fragile situation in Paki- n will have both negative and positive implication on the resolution Kashmir problem. The negative dimension would be that hardliners

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within the Indian establishment will impress upon the political leadership not only to fully wriggle out of the stalled dialogue but also to taken an advantage of situation in Pakistan and will advocate for some adventure.

The positive implications are that stability gives an advantage to the Manmohan Singh government to take some bold initiatives for resolution of all outstanding issues with Pakistan including that of Jamma and Kashmir. This uncertain situation calls for a greater political foresight of Kashmir leadership, it will have to understand that the global situation was a transitory phase and best course in such a situation was not to rush for conclusion but to wait and watch.

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Looking For The Leader

Dear friends! Don't misread me as you often do whenever I write about leaders". I do not intend to belittle any one. I am not set to dwarf any towering" one. If I say that I don't see a leader who in the words of John R Childress, goes beyond merely reacting to change as it comes up, but rather predicting and redirecting change before it comes up. It is a question asked countless times, why we did not have a better leadership, a leadership that could deliver us out of more than two hundred years old predicament and agony. This question has been irking me. It might have haunted many others, disappointed and outraged them. Most of the times I failed to find an answer to this question. I often tried to bury this question deep in the hinterland of my mind, but it often resurfaced, whenever I saw leaders stumbling but refusing to see.

I was once again reminded of the cry for leadership in our society three days back by a childhood friend in the Kashmir University. When this avowed reader of all my writings commented on my frequent usage of word leadership for politicians and activists struggling for the right to self-determination. He complained that I was too liberal in using this word. He questioned if all those struggling for right to self-determination could be called as leaders. I did read bemoan in his eyes for my avoiding word leadership for those outside the pro-freedom canopy more particularly those in the office and those running for it. The lament in the eyes of my friend made me look into the whole question of leadership in our state. Having seen good many leaders in action during past more than five decades , worked in harness with some of them, the question that has been haunting my mind is that why even the ripe political situations failed to throw up the right leaders, who could translate that situation in people's victory.

The most important period in our contemporary history is the sec-

ond quarter of the twentieth century. It threw up one after another leader that played a significant role in shaping destiny of people of the state. In 1922 Chowdary Ghulam Abbass revived the Young Men's Muslim Association, an organization of Jammu Muslims that had become defunct after its birth in 1909. This organization he headed from 1924 to 1929 played a prominent role in raising its voice against the discriminatory treatment meted out to the Muslims of the state. It is this organization that after bringing Kashmir within ambit of its activities played catalytic role in launching the movement that found its expression in June 1931. It was also almost at the same time that people started looking for spark of leadership in a tall, lanky and bony faced school teacher, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah. It was the religious intolerance of the Dogra policeman and the sacrilege of the Holy Quran in Jammu that created an opportune time for the two leaders to emerge and dominate the political scene. The two leaders seized this opportunity and converted it into a movement, a successful movement. The July 1931 happenings brought the plight of Kashmiri Muslims under sharp focus and earned a lot of sympathy for them in the sub-continent and outside.

In the dismal scenario of twenties and thirties of the past centuries I see the birth of the Muslim Conference and the struggle it led as great success of these leaders. It was during the six years struggle of the Muslim Conference that all giant leaders that played key role in Kashmir struggle were born. It was this period that gave Kashmir a host of leaders, Mirwaiz Molvi Muhammad Yusuf Shah, Allah Rakha Sagar, Mistiri Muhmmad Yaqoob, Molvi Muhammad Syed Masoodi , Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad, Mirza Afzal Beg, Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq, Ghualm Ahmed Ashai, Muhammad Yusuf Qureshi and many others. I don't see any giant political leader emerging in the post 1938 period. It was this leadership that dominated the political scene for next five decades. It was this leadership that led the National Conference, the Muslim Conference and the Plebiscite Front. Neither the Muslim Conference nor the National Conference produced any leader of reckoning after 1938. Here I am not going to analyze the failures or the successes of the leadership thrown up by the situations in thirties but to see why after this batch of leaders no other important leader was born. The

Muslim Conference after the death of Chowdary Ghulam Abbass did not produce any leader even across the LOC. Same is true about the National Conference. It also did not produce a single person after the death of Sheikh Abdullah who could be called a leader. Sheikh Abdullah succeeded in transferring power to his son and grandson but left no leader behind for leading his party that now seems shriveling.

History did throw up many other situations ripe enough for producing better leadership that could have played a significant role in taking out people out of the predicament. The post 1964 situations were opportune enough to have produced another batch of important leaders that could have played a noteworthy role in shaping political destiny of the state. The 1964 saw birth of Jammu and Kashmir Students and Youth League, an organization that had the potential of producing a new crop of leadership. It is a subject for study as to why this organization failed to produce future leadership like the Young Men's Muslim Association of Jammu. Had the 1964 situation thrown up a competent leadership it could have taken over from the leadership of 1931 and perhaps the Plebiscite Front would not have been buried unceremoniously.

In fact no charismatic leader of stature emerged on the political scene of the state after 1938. In 1964, the Jammu and Kashmir Awami Action Committee was born. This organization was seen by many as successor of the Muslim Conference. This organization got number of opportunities to grow as a state organization but for lack of vision of its leaders, it lost one after another occasion to grow as a state level people's organization that could lead people towards their goal. History opened another big opportunity to this party in 1975. Notwithstanding the organization initially offering some resistance against the surrender of the Front leadership, its leader preferred to live a cocooned political life.

The birth of the Jammu and Kashmir People's League after the Indira-Sheikh Accord was seen as an organization to be watched for future. It had the people's acceptability but for division in its ranks it also could not grow to the stature of a state level resistance organization like its predecessor the Plebiscite Front. The Jammu and Kashmir Jamat-e-Islamia is a cadre based organization. This organization for its

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considering Kashmir problem as a secondary issue also failed to grow as a popular people's organization. The organization did throw up a plethora of religious leaders, some of whom were acclaimed and respected but none of them had the mass acceptability as a political leader. Seen in right perspective, it only has been Syed Ali Geelani from this organization that for his steadfastness and commitment succeeded in earning people's acceptability in the post 1990 situation as a leader of stature outside his organization. The late seventies saw another man making his presence felt in the State Assembly and on the streets of Srinagar by holding protest rallies against the issues like the Land Grants Bill or in support of the Resettlement Bill. This man, Abdul Gani Lone did hold promise of emerging as a leader to be reckoned with but his influence remained confined to some areas of North Kashmir.

The year 1990 is another important watershed in the history of the state. The post 1990 phase will be remembered as a period of unprecedented sacrifices and sufferings. The phase would be remembered as an era of great brave soldiers with highest commitment to their cause. True, the post 1990 situation has thrown up unprecedented crowd of political workers calling themselves leaders. But I don't see the situation as yet having thrown up The Leader, compelling and creative, in the tradition of leaders that strode across political horizons of the Subcontinent in the first half of the past century, Gandhi, Nehru, Quaid and Iqbal. To understand the phenomenon of failure of the post 1990 situation throwing up the leader, competent enough to take us out of the swamps of uncertainty, let me borrow some lines from John W Gardner who served six US presidents in various capacities: "Citizens must understand the possibility and limitations of leadership. We must know how we can strengthen and support good leaders; and we must be able to see through the leaders who are exploiting us, playing on our hatred and prejudice or treading down the dangerous path— if we are lazy, self-indulgent, and wanting to be deceived; if we willingly follow corrupt leaders; ..If we fail to be faithful monitors of public process, then we shall get and deserve the worst.

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Story of A Resolutionary

Seventy eight years after he shot into prominence the question remains who was Abdul Qadeer? It remains shrouded in mystery, it would be appropriate to say continues to remain buried deep in the debris of our history. The question that many of our historians thought was answered when it resurfaced on the martyrs day, when Kashmir Uzama a sister publication of this newspaper in its special number on its front page carried an unpublished picture supposed to be of Abdul Qadeer. The picture was culled out from his rich archives by one of the leading houseboat owners and provided to this newspaper.

The front page picture of Qadeer in a boat stimulated a muffled debate more in the journalist fraternity and less in the camp of historians. My curiosity in the picture was roused on two counts: one, an editor of a weekly newspaper and author of many books on Kashmir history phoned me up and said that it could not be Qadeer. He tried to draw a graphic picture of the hero of our struggle. He painted him Herculean, a towering Pathan much taller than Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan. Another thing that aroused my curiosity in the truth about the man was an official handout issued under PR/DI/2009/765 Dated 13 July 2009- carried next day by most of the newspapers. In this handout Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah was quoted as having made two statements which as a student of contemporary history I believe are not only distortion but belying the facts. One, the day reminded the people of the death of Abdul Qadeer, who was the "dear assistant of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and had joined him in the fight against the oppressive rule." Two, the title of lion was conferred on Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah "when he hoisted the red banner indicating the sacred blood of people for restoration of their democratic rights and strengthening the pillars of secularism, brotherhood and mutual love in the state." It would be

milder to say that both the statements attributed to Omar Abdullah, grandson of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, one of the pioneers of struggle against the usurpers of the rights of people; more particularly of the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir are blatant lies. It is not my cup of tea to contradict the official handout or to find out if Omar Abdullah had really made these statements. I am not to say that he is ignoramus about history of the people he is Governing, but my interest is looking in right historical perspective at the role played by Abdul Qadeer. Before coming to Qadeer's role let me say that Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah was titled as the Lion of Kashmir much before the birth of the National Conference in 1938. The party adopted red flag with plough much later. The flag of the Muslim Conference from its birth was usual Islamic flag, green with white crescent in the middle that we see hoisted on mosques even today.

Much before coming to Qadeer's role in shaping our struggle against unjust and cruel autocratic rule, there is need to understand that what catapulted a non-state subject to the centre stage of the state politics. True, the political struggle of Kashmir at no point has been a religious crusade but it has been a struggle for justice and restoration of right to democratic self-rule. But it cannot be denied that it has been religious issues that have propelled all major political struggles in the state. The 1931 movement that is seen as an important benchmark in our struggle which in fact is older than India's Freedom Struggle was caused because of sacrilege of Holy Quran in Jammu. The displacement of the prophets hair from the Hazratbal shrine in 1963 was catalytic in not only ending the eleven years rule of Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad but also in reviving the movement led by Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah for holding of plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir under the aegis of the United Nations Security Councle. The political heat generated by the displacement remained for twelve years till Sheikh signed an accord that enabled him to return to power. The relic movement also bred a new crop of leadership in the state. The role of religion can also be attributed to 2008 mass agitation against the allotment of forest land to a religious organization that had seen millions converging on the roads. History testifies beyond any shadow of doubt that it was the religious sentiment that brought Qadeer to the centre stage of struggle against

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feudal autocracy. Most of the historians agree on this point that it was one after other incidents of denial of religious freedom in Jammu to Muslims that caused the mass upsurge of 1931. Prem Nath Bazaz in his book Inside Kashmir quotes three such incidents where the Dogra soldier prevented Muslims from fulfilling their religious obligations (page 120-125) and it were these incidents that agitated the Muslims in Jammu. In spite of the lack of communication, the wide about maltreatment of Jammu Muslims reached Srinagar like a "wildfire". It in fact was the sacrilege of the Holy Quran that angered Muslims all over the "country." The Young Men's Muslim Association of Jammu under the leadership of Chowdary Ghulam Abbas published big posters and these posters were pasted by the members of the Reading Room in Srinagar in different parts of the city. It was these posters that stirred the people. The sacrilege of the Holy Quran united people of all sects. Prem Nath Bazaz Writes, "All sectional differences were relegated to the background. Sunnis, Shias, Hanfis, Wahabis and Ahmedies joined hands." On 21st June 1931 people gathered at Khanqah-i-Mulla to voice their concern against infringing religious freedom of Muslims. It was at this gathering that Abdul Qadeer appeared on the stage and thunderously challenged the autocratic ruler and asked the people to rise in revolt against the feudal Maharaja. It is not of much a consequence whether he was from the Frontier Province, Rai Barely or Amrohi in UP or Punjab. It is an insult to Kashmir history that we have not been in a position to arrive at a consensus where from this man had arrived in Srinagar. Prem Nath Bazaz tracing him to Frontier Province writes that he was an ugly-looking, short statured Pathan, but Mohammad Yusuf Saraf describes him a stout, belonging to Amarohi UP and Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah traces his origin to UP. Sheikh Abdullah in his autobiography very candidly hails Qadeer for sparking centuries old volcano through his speech. He at no point describes him as his ace assistant but an inspiring man. He writes before July 13 incident he used to visit Hazratbal shrine for prayers and addressed gathering highlighting plight of Muslims. He writes he was worried about the plight of Muslims and had met me once in Jamia Masjid and had shown deep association with our movement. Sheikh writes that he had praised commitment of people to the cause of movement. In the words of Sheikh

Abdullah "Qadeer put magical oil in the dried wick of our lamp that brightened it beyond our imagination" (Sheikh's Urdu autobiography page 83-87).

Though there is scant information about Qadeer but his speeches whether in Hazratbal or anywhere else sufficiently suggest that it could not be an ordinary butler who could speak so eloquently. His enthusiasm and passion could not be of a servant of a sahib but of someone who had greater understanding of the affairs of Muslims in the subcontinent. Sheikh writes that he was illiterate but his articulation and the content of his speech at Khanqah-i-Moula belie it:

Muslim Brethren! The time has now come when we should meet the force by greater force to put an end to tyrannies and brutalities to which you are subjected; nor will they solve the issue of disrespect to Holy Quran to your satisfaction. You must rely upon your own strength and wage a relentless war against oppression. Pointing his finger towards Palace he thundered "raise it to ground. Pull down its every brick".

This speech sufficiently suggest that he was a revolutionary and his concern about the Muslims in the state and outside does indicate that he could have been inspired by men like Syed Ahmed Shaheed or leaders like Jamal Afghani.

Let me reiterate to the irritation of professional historian, there is need for greater commitment for writing truthful history of our land than looking for wages.

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Yusuf Buch As I See Him

Some time back, I wrote that there was no Edward Said on our side. My lament was more out of concern rather than critique. I believe that an intellectually stimulating discourse on Kashmir was missing and so far it was pathetically routine and blatantly de- intellectualized projection of the Kashmir case that had vexed it thus far. I wrote it as I believed that Said was the best Palestine voice in the West, who very forcefully through his books, articles and lectures articulated the Palestine cause in the West and in fact changed the Western discourse on Palestine. It was his book the Question of Palestine written in 1977-78 and published in 1979 that put the Palestine issue to serious debate in the intellectual circles of the West. The fact is in the sea of literature on Kashmir dispute there is not a single internationally acclaimed book by a Kashmiri that could play a role as that by Edward Said's works.

I was reminded of another great Palestinian who has been articulating the Palestine cause very forcefully in the world when a researcher working on Kashmir asked me if there was any one like Ghada Karmi of Kashmiri origin in the west. Ghada Karmi is a leading Palestinian author, academic and writer. This Jerusalem born author was brought up and educated in England. She is author of many well received books on Palestine. I am yet to read any of her works. I have read some reviews about her memoir, In Search of Fatima; a Palestinian story that was published by Verso Press in 2002. I had no stock answer for the researcher but two names that are recognized as Kashmir face in the West more particularly in the United States instantly came to my mind, one in his mid eighties and another in his mid fifties. The man in mid eighties is Kalashpora Srinagar born Muhammad Yusuf Buch, popularly known as Ambassador Yusuf Buch and another Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, a Budgam born, former Temple University, Pennsylvania, USA com-

munication scholar and teacher. Fai Sahib as he is popularly called by Kashmir Diasporas has published on Kashmir in the American mainstream press. Both Buch and Fai were exiled for their political beliefs one in 1947 and another in 1980.

The story of Yusuf Buch is perhaps known to few in his homeland. On its tenth International Peace Conference, Ambassador Buch was honored by Kashmiri-American Council at an impressive ceremony on Washington DC for his life of courage, conviction and unwavering commitment to the rights of the oppressed people of Jammu and Kashmir. A plaque was awarded to him at the ceremony which paid high tributes to him. He would have been better known in Kashmir, had people like Shameem Ahmed Shameem who had longer interactions with him in seventies written their memoirs. In the words of a Pakistani writer Mr A.R. Sidiqi "During the period between 1949-1950, there were at least three bright young Kashmiri activists who held out a lot of promise to emerge as exponents of their case at the intellectual level like Ghada Karmi. They were Yusuf Buch, Mehmood Hashmi and Agha Shaukat Ali. They had all the makings of committed revolutionaries endowed with the gift of persuasive speech and simple, well-reasoned writing and, above all, the advantage of youth." These three young Kashmiris undoubtedly could have emerged as Kashmir voice in the world in the vein of Edward Said but in the words of Sidiqi, "However, none of them quite came up to the level expected of them as Kashmiri freedom fighters and thinkers. Mehmood Hashmi did write a book or two on the early stages of the Kashmir tragedy; Yusuf Buch settled to become a speech-writer and back-stage support for Pakistani delegates to the UN, rising to ministerial rank under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto; and Agha Shaukat Ali was lost to the soulless routine of professional public relations." Another Kashmiri that held promises of having emerged as an international voice of Kashmir was Khurishid Hassan Khurshid, Srinagar born Secretary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Sidiqi writes about his this friend, that he lost his true place as a writer and intellectual after he became president of AJK.

Ambassador Yusuf Buch who worked for twenty two years as advisor to the United Nations Secretary General is yet to write his memoirs or a book on Kashmir, but some of his published articles in internationally acclaimed journals, newspapers, or presentations at various international conferences do provide an insight into his understanding of Kashmir problem.

Buch who as young boy had along with his father and two brothers Muhammad Amin Buch and Ghulam Naqashband seen and heard Abdul Qadeer in 1931 asking people to pull down the mansions of arrogance and palaces of suppression writes about Kashmir problem in an article published in the Dawn, "The long history of the Kashmir dispute is a tragic demonstration of the fact that recrimination can be endless and absent in judicial authority, no matter how powerful in logic and compelling in equity, hardly decides anything. The great suffering and pain borne by the people of Kashmir as well as the heavy cost inflicted on both India and Pakistan by persistence of this dispute should beckon us away from the sterilities assiduously pursued so far. They should drive us to identify helpful courses of action which can potentially elicit agreement from the parties concerned."

Yusuf Buch does not believe that there exists a power rivalry between India and Pakistan to which Kashmir could be kept hostage. Calling power rivalry between India and Pakistan as a cliché, a thoughtless journalistic invention, in an article he writes "Why should Pakistan take up rivalry with a country almost seven times larger than itself in population and even more so in area?" The invention of rivalry he writes played its own, hardly negligible, role in blocking a clear understanding. It belittles India without magnifying Pakistan." His asking to drift away from the futilities pursued in past speaks about his pragmatic approach grounded in the history for the resolution of the problem.

While majority of Kashmir writers and leaders looked at General Parvez Musharraf four point formula as a great way forward, Buch looked at it if not frivolous but irresponsible. About his out of box four point formula for the resolution of Kashmir he wrote in an article. "They seem to have been conceived in a mood which dispenses with clarity and advanced in a style which cares little for coherence. In fact, they do not bear even a faint imprint of serious, focused discussions with his own quite competent Foreign Office, not to speak of leaders of public thought. General Musharraf likes to talk of an "outside the box" solution; surely "outside the box" does not mean contrary to principle.....To

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compromise that principle, to waver on that stand seems singularly ill-advised; it amounts to throwing away what, in a world of ordered international life, is a priceless asset. It would be so even if it got some return from India." Seeing negative implications of the General Mascara's what he calls as half-baked and misdirected efforts blurred further by what he pronounces as weird statements of Pakistan's accidental president. He sounds optimistic about change in the thinking of Indian intelligentsia about Kashmir. In yet another article he writes, "As against these developments, a far healthier one is the evolution and greater visibility of thoughtful Indian opinion on the Kashmir issue. Since the fall of 2008, a number of articles have appeared in the mainstream Indian press written by respected publicists who do not support India's official intransigence."

Whether one agrees or disagrees with his political outlook the writings and noting of Ambassador Yusuf Buch are a part of Kashmir's political literature that could be seen as good as Edward Said's works on Palestine. His works on Kashmir need to be compiled, researched and preserved. Engaging Intelligentsia

It has passed through many a vicissitudes. It has seen many a trough and crest. The Kashmir dispute ever since its birth in 1947 on the floors of the United Nations has made many an academicians and scholars to look at the birth of this problem and its resolutions from different angles. Scores of books have been written on this problem by eminent American and British scholars. The genesis of the problem can be described in a few sentences unless one intends to add complexity to this issue. The problem otherwise is as simple as adding and subtracting of sums for class three students. The genesis is that India complained against Pakistan in the United Nations that it had invaded Kashmir. The United Nations after thorough debates adopted resolutions which were promptly accepted by India, Pakistan and comity of nations. The resolutions called for holding of a plebiscite under its aegis for deciding the future of this strategically located state bordering Afghanistan, China, Russia, Pakistan and India. No plebiscite was held is the history. To see right to decide granted to people of Jammu and Kashmir as it stood on 14 August 1947, movements were started at different periods of time by different people and organizations. There has been hardly any leader from

Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah to Syed Ali Geelani who has not led this movement at one or other point of time.

To see the UN resolution implemented, the organizations and political leaders not only led movements but tried to engage liberal leadership and intelligentsia for furthering their demands. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah had many a liberal friends and intelligentsia. Whenever he would be out of jail he endeavored to involve his friends in mobilizing India's mass opinion in support of his movement. In mid nineties Hurriyat Conference under the leadership of Abdul Gani Lone sent a delegation to different Indian states for roping in support of Indian intelligentsia in particular and masses in general for the movement led by his organization. Lone made some fervent speeches in various Indian states and perhaps won support of some liberal intelligentsia. It has not only been the Hurriyat Conference but the Kashmir Diaspora organizations in United States, United Kingdom and other parts of the world that have been holding conferences for identifying the different dimensions of Kashmir problem and finding an amicable solution. The main highlight of the conferences held by Kashmir Diaspora, more particularly by the Kashmiri American Council and the London based Justice Foundation Kashmir centre, has been involving not only Kashmir leaders and intelligentsia from both the sides but also political leaders and intelligentsia from India and Pakistan. Most of the Diaspora leaders believe that encouraging and involving greater number of Indian intelligentsia would not only help in creating a public opinion but would also help in changing the mind set of India establishment.

The Kashmiri American Council,/ Kashmir Centre with Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai as its Executive Director has so far held ten international peace conferences in Washington for permanent peace in South Asia and finding ways. Most of these conferences have been held in different halls of the Capitol Hill- the centre of US power. More than seventy leading Indian academicians, scholars, jurists, opinion makers, columnists and journalists have been speakers at these conferences. It has been eminent people like Raj Mohan Gandhi, Rajinder Sachar, Kuldip Nayar, M.J. Akbar, Dr. Subramanium Swamy, Pushpa Iyer, Raju Thomas and , Prof. Kamal Chenoy. In the series of conferences, the tenth international Kashmir peace conference was held on Capitol Hill, in Washing-

ton DC on 23rd and 24th July 2009. The conference hosted by Dr Ghulam Nabi Fai of the Kashmir American Council and Dr Karen Parker, chairman of the Association of Humanitarian lawyers was compendium of opinions. 55 delegates from India, Pakistan, and both sides of the state of Jammu and Kashmir assembled to deliberate upon the peaceful resolution of this sixty year old dispute that caused three wars between India and Pakistan.

The Conference attended by about 350 opinion makers and stake holders was inaugurated in the glittering Cannon Hall of the Capitol Hill by Congressmen Jim Moran, Don Burton and Congresswoman, Yvette Clarke. Many other Congress men that included John Conyers and John Pitts also made their presentations.

The conference debated over varied dimensions of Kashmir dispute. The topics discussed on the first day included the regional and international dimensions of the issue; breaking the deadlock over Kashmir in terms of Indo-Pakistani relations; militarization and impunity in Jammu and Kashmir, and the centrality of Kashmiris rights. Presentations on these subjects were made by academicians, authors, scholars, journalists, political leaders, diplomats and human right activists. Amongst those who made their presentations on this day included Raja Zulqarnain, President Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Ambassador Hussain Haqani Ambassador of Pakistan in the United States, Ambassador Yusuf Buch, Ambassador Howard Schaffer, Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, Dr. Maleeh Lodhi, former US envoy Ms. Harinder Baweja, Tapan Bose, Gatum Navlakha, author Ms. Victoria Schofield, Prof. G.R.Malik, Dr. Angana Chatterji, Pandit Jitender Bakshi, Dr. Idrisa Pandit, Dr. Naseem Ashraf, Ved Bhasin and Dr. Khalid Jehngir.

The tone for the conference was set by host Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, Executive Director Kashmiri American Council and Kashmir Centre. Dr Ghulam Nabi Fai said that the conference aimed at discussing how there could be a peaceful resolution of the dispute in which the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir were paramount. The objective, he said, was to achieve the Kashmiris aims in the spirit of reconciliation not confrontation, through equality not discrimination, and with hope not despair."

On the second day, the participants discussed subjects, the Kashmiris aspirations: innovative models and fresh options; Kashmir: A way Forward, Kashmir Next: If peaceful protests fail and what impact confidence building measures between India and Pakistan had on Kashmir. Those who participated made their presentation on the second day and participated in the deliberations included, Ms. Karen Parker, Ms. Victoria Schofield, Ms. Rizwana Abbasi, Dr. Idrisa Pandit, Dr. Angana Chatterji, Ambassador Maleeh Lodhi, Mr. David Wolfe, Mr. Tod Shea, Mr. Tapan Bose, Mr. Gautum Navlakhi, Pandit Jitender Bakshi, Mr. Ved Bhasin, Mr. M. Ismail Khan, Senator Mushaid Hussain, Ambassador Yusuf Buch, Dr. Ghulam Nabi Mir, Prof. Faizanul Haq, Prof. G.R. Malik, Prof. Bishnu Podal, Prof. Wasiullah Khan, Mr. Mohammad Saleem Bhat, Sardar Siddique, Sardar Sarwar Khan, Mr. Malik Nadeem Abid, Mr. Sardar Ayaz Sidiq, Mr. Altaf Qadiri, Raja Zulqarnain Khan.

The theme song that emerged from the two days deliberation was that Kashmir continues to be a nuclear flashpoint in South-Asia. The periodic eruptions like happenings in Mumbai will continue to risk the nuclear neighbors and violence will continue to chase the region unless the Kashmir problem is resolved to the wishes of the people of the state. The peace in the state could prove very fragile if the issue was not resolved to the aspirations of the people of the state. Though there was variability of perceptions in the conference yet there was unanimity of thought amongst delegates from India, Pakistan and Kashmir that status quo shall have to go. The speakers also debated as to how over-militarization of the state had affected its economy. The human rights situation in Kashmir was high on agenda more particularly the May 2009 rape and murder of a school girl and a pregnant woman dominated the discussion after Dr Angana Chatterji, scholar-activist, circulated a detailed report, that she had recently compiled entitled Militarization with Impunity.

Though no Indian official despite invitations attended the conference yet the Indian delegates seemed sympathetic to Kashmir cause. A leading Indian Journalist Harinder Baweja, of Tehelka magazine in New Delhi, opined that Kashmir was not a piece of real estate but involved the rights of people." Gautam Navlakha, editorial consultant of the Economic and Political Weekly, New Delhi forewarned New Delhi about

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serious threats that procrastinating the resolution of the Kashmir dispute poses to India. He very strongly made his point If the aspirations of Kashmiris continued to be ignored; the armed struggle could start again which will have repercussions for all of South Asia.The highpoint of the conference was unanimous adoption of a resolution drafted by with four of its members from India. The resolution besides stating that the people of Jammu and Kashmir constitute the principle stakeholders called for the cessation of militarization and human rights violations, and the implementation of justice expeditiously.

The conference attracted columns both in India, Pakistan and outside by eminent writers like Victoria Schofield, Maleeh Lodhi and Harinder Baweja. To conclude, it would be worth to quote from Harinder Baweja's piece in Tehelka:

"Why does India always shy away from the K-word? Why are we touchy about international attention or the slightest criticism? Why do we try to cover up the shameful rape and murder of young women in Shopian? Why do we always harp back to the same tired and outdated lines: "Oh, but Kashmir is an integral part of India", or "But Kashmir is a bilateral issue" M. A. Jinnah and Kashmir

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah is back in headlines not in the country he created but in a country where he has been painted villainous for past sixty two years. It is his charisma that survives sixty nine years after adoption of the resolution for Pakistan with same nerve as it lived at that time. This time it is Jaswant Singh's book tilted Jinnah, India, Independence and Partition, released seven days back on August 17, 2009. The book by India's former Foreign Minister and one of the most important and front ranking leaders of the BJP has caused a storm not only in his party but also the rival Congress. Mr. Singh has not added any new dimension to the partition story by squarely blaming Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patil, two of India's most important leaders, for India's partition who were hitherto portrayed as symbol of India's secularism and driving force behind the integration of Indian states. Singh very rightly points out that he was not titled as Quaid-e-Azam for "virtually conjuring a country by the force of his indomitable will". True as very aptly written by Stanley Wolpert , "Few individuals significantly alter the course of history. Fewer still modify the map of the world. Hardly

anyone can be credited with creating a nation state. Muhammad Ali Jinnah did all the three." It was not for this colossal work that he was called the great but much before that, it was for his epic journey from being ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity to his clean politics and be- ing described as the most incorruptible leader of the sub-continent, that he was hailed as the greatest leader of the sub-continent.

During an interview with Karan Thapar, author of the book Jaswant Singh, made it clear that he was very much attracted by Quaid's personality, which resulted in writing a book. In his words, "If I was not drawn to his personality, I would not have written the book... He [not only] fought the British for an independent India but also fought resolutely and relentlessly for the interest of the Muslims of India .He was great; a self made man who resolutely worked towards achieving what he had set for himself." The former Indian Foreign Minister writes that Quaid created something out of nothing and single-handedly stood against the might of the Congress and the British who didn't really like him...Gandhi himself called Jinnah a great Indian. Why don't we recognize that? Why Don't we see (and try to understand) why he called him that?.. I admire certain aspects of his personality; his determination and the will to rise." The role played by Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patil in denying the Muslims their due space in free India that pushed Quaid for demanding separate land is a historical reality that has been recounted by the author of the new book. It is not Jaswant Singh alone who has spoken the historical truth; there have been many other biographers of Muhammad Ali Jinnah who have brought out these realities. Notwithstanding Fatima Jinnah having expressed and identified certain factual inaccuracies about Quaid's childhood, the book, Jinnah: Creator of Pakistan by Hector Bolitho also brings out certain stark realities about the role of Congress in partitioning India. In the book titled the Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and Demand for Pakistan, Dr. Ayesha Jalal has dealt the subject quite in depth, so has been done by Stanly Wolpert in his book Jinnah of Pakistan. But what makes the work done by Jaswant Singh different is speaking the truth about a person who has been demonized by the State and Indian leadership for more than six decades. Dr. Wahed Qureshi writes, "The Lucknow-Pact was perhaps the last successful attempt for the Hindu

Muslim Unity. Subsequent events proved that the Congress leadership was representative of Hindu majority only and missed no opportunity of damaging the interests of the Muslims. When the Khalifat movement failed and Muslim intellectuals were in the grip of confusion' the political genius of Gandhi caused further demoralization in them." In this hour of crisis we see that Jinnah had no confusion and he had clear vision about safeguarding the interests of Muslims and saving them from hegemonic Hindu chauvinistic policies of Congress. Drawing parallels between the leadership of Gandhi and Jinnah, Jaswant Singh says, "[Gandhi's] had almost an entirely religious provincial flavour while [Jinnah's] was doubtless imbued by a non-sectarian nationalistic zeal".

Jinnah was undoubtedly highly principled man who did not believe saying things in drawing rooms that he could not talk in public. His address of August 11, 1947 has been described by E.H. Enver, as "epitome of Muslim, indeed of all, statecraft. It bears comparison to the charge of Moses to Israelites and last sermon of Prophet. He banished all discrimination as prophet had done." With great eloquence he said, " If you change your past and work together in a spirit that everyone of you, no matter to what community he belongs, no matter what relations he had with you in the past, no matter what is his color, caste or creed, in first, second and last, a citizen of Pakistan with equal rights, privileges and obligations, there will be no to the progress you make." It is not only this speech that speaks about the vision of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, his entire life is a story of steadfastness, truth, clarity of thought and indomitable will. He holds the same interests for genuine intellectuals today as he held when he was living. As history unfolds itself further, he will emerge from its page as more towering and more heroic leader than many others. There can be no two opinions that the book by Jaswant Singh is one of the good works on Quaid but what has been puzzling is that none of his biographers has written in detail about his involvement in Kashmir Freedom Struggle, his principled stand on Kashmir and his commitment to Kashmiris.

He visited Kashmir for the first time in 1929. He had seen the plight of this nation sold by the British as merchandise for paltry sum of Rs. 75 lakhs. This visit that was private had enabled him to feel the plight of the Muslim subjects of a Hindu ruler. He had seen how the working

ass and peasantry had been crushed under the worst ever tax system the history of mankind.

Quaid-e-Azam visited Kashmir second time in 1936. The speech him during this visit at Mujahid Manzil headquarters of the Mus- Conference amply testify his strict belief in religious tolerance. The Muslim Conference at this point of time was led by Chowdary Ghulam Abbas and Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah. Addressing the meeting orga- ized in connection with Milad-un-Nabi he told people that Kashmir was Muslim majority state and it was the duty of majority community to ensure justice and fair play to the minority Hindus.

Third time that was his last visit happened in 1944. On this visit he came into the State through Sailkot. He arrived in Jammu on May 8. He was accompanied by Chowdary Abass. At Jammu reception, Quaid-e-Azam addressed massive public gathering in English which was instantly translated by Allah Rakha Sagar. He was greeted by surging crowds en- route from Jammu to Srinagar. Mirwaiz Muhammad Yusuf the tower- ing Muslim Conference leader greeted him at Khanabal Islamabad. Here he took tea with him. Mirza Muhammad Afzal Beg and Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad were also present on the occasion. Quaid talked in great detail to Mirwaiz and wanted to know his ideas about bringing unity amongst the Muslims of Kashmir which were divided in two distinct political factions, the Muslim Conference and National Conference.

On his arrival in Srinagar he was accorded a rousing reception by the National Conference led by Sheikh Abdullah and Muslim Confer- ence led by Chaudary Abbas. At the reception organized by the Na- tional Conference in Partap Patk a welcome speech in Urdu was read by Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and it was translated by Jai Lal Kilam a National Conference leader. On dice he was flanked on one side by Sheikh Abdullah and on the other side by Chowdary Ghulam Abbas.

"The Quaid-e-Azam thanked the National Conference leadership for the royal reception given to him but at the same time said that it was not a reception for his person, but to the All India Muslim League, the party of ten crore Muslims of India of which he was President." The remarks of Quaid were not liked by Hindu leaders in the National Con- ference. Bashir Ahmed Qureshi in his book on Chowdary Abbas writes Kilam immediately left the stage. After reception at Partap Park, an-

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other reception was accorded to him at Dalgate, Srinagar by the Muslim Conference and Kashmir Muslim Students Union. "The Quaid spoke out his heart at this reception, writes Qureshi. His clarion call was "Oh ye Muslims, Our Allah is one, our Prophet (SAW) is one and our Quran is one, therefore, our voice and PARTY MUST BE ONE". At this reception he emphasized the need for unity amongst the Muslim Conference leaders.

On this visit Quaid stayed in Srinagar for two months and fully engaged himself in giving a direction to the Kashmir Freedom struggle. Quaid's involvement in Kashmir in itself is a very large subject that deserve an in-depth study. It is not only his role in Kashmir that needs to attract the attention of young researchers and scholars; it is his role in 1947 and his views about the birth of Kashmir problem that deserve a deeper research. Though lot has been said about the happenings by historians like Stanly Wolpert and Alistair Lamb and much more is available in various archives in bits and pieces but it could be consolidated research work that can do justice to the subject. Jinnah: Epitome of Statecraft

Can wars for the Rights be won on the Twitter or the Facebook? This question haunted my mind when I read a news item in most newspapers, Twitter silenced in China ahead of Tiananmen anniversary. I had not seen the action as muzzling of freedom of expression but also as an overreaction towards social networking and social media. But, after reading Jaswant Singh's book on Quaid-i-Azam, Jinnah, I am convinced that in today world the battles for the rights and the freedom can be fought on the Web not in the battlefields. When I first read the often repeated sentence that Quaid-e-Azam won Pakistan through his typewriter, I denounced it hyperbolic but after reading Jaswant Singh's book I believe the statement as the gospel truth. The author has beautifully brought out the debates and discussions that took place between Jinnah and Gandhi, Jinnah and Nehru and Jinnah and Mountbatten through letters. It is the graphic details of correspondence and arguments and counter arguments that took place between Quaid-e-Azam and Mahtma Gandhi and on the negotiating table that makes the book distinct from other biographies of Quaid.

This 669 page book about Quaid by one of India's top leaders is great odyssey that takes us through the most momentous and historic periods of the history of the Indian Sub-Continent and enables us to look dispassionately at the people who shaped it. But it is not a book of its first kind. There are many biographies on Quaid. Some totally biased and detached from facts of history, some like the one by Dr. Rafiq Zakarai, the Man Who Divided India, exuding with venom. There are some of his admirers who have totally exaggerated the facts, but there are some dispassionate historians like Ayesha Jalal and Stanly Wolpert too. The book under debate has not said much that has not been said earlier but it gained importance and also credibility for it having been written by an Indian politician brought up in hate culture of Hindutva.

In my understanding the first chapter of the book titled, India and Islam, holds the key to the saga that unfolds in the subsequent chapters. In this chapter the author has looked at the birth of Pakistan in the context of various Islamic movements that struck their roots in the subcontinent after the advent of Islam. He mentions Syed Ahmed of Bareilly, Saiyed Ahmed Khan, Saiyed Jamal-ad-Din Afghani, Deoband and so on. He discusses how these movements shaped Muslim mind differently from rest of the population in the region. The author in this chapter discusses in detail about 1857 happenings and how they shaped the mind of Muslim intelligentsia. The author writes:

"Such reform movements contributed then to gradual transformation of Indian Muslim community from aggregate of believers into political association with a will for joint action."

It in fact has been this "will for joint action" born out of the historical forces that had been at work during eight hundred years of Muslim rule in many parts of the Indian Sub-continent that needs to be seen as the foundation for the movement that found logical end in the birth of Pakistan.

Quoting from the 1888 writings of, Lord Dufferin, then viceroy of India, the author writes that he described the Muslims of British India as a nation of some 50 million, with their monotheism, their oclastic fanaticism, their animal sacrifices and their social equality and their remembrances of the day on their own at Delhi, they reigned supreme". It is this sense of loss of supremacy that we see in this chapter as pro-

viding grist to the mill of politics of identity. While analyzing politics of identity Jaswant Singh writes that Minto's response was encouraging. It was his decision that "Mohammedan" community should be represented as community in all affairs. "This contributed to "separatist's mentality," so believes the author of the book.

It is in this scenario we see the emergence of the Muslim League. It is in this chapter only we see how various forces of history work in tandem that catapulted Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to the centre stage of politics in the subcontinent. The author recognizing this historical reality says:

"It is here that Mohammed Ali Jinnah arrived to etch his own, as also future of Muslims of India on copper plate of time."

In second chapter of the book the author very vividly tells us not only about the early life of Quaid-i- Azam and his emergence as a dominant political leader. Jinnah undoubtedly religiously tolerant, modern in his ideas and forward looking but we see that from the day he joined politics the interests of Indian Muslims have been very dear to him. The interest of Quaid-i-Azam in Muslim affairs has not been a later day development but his political life began along with the joining of Anjuman-i-Islam, a prominent Muslim body in 1897. Jaswant Singh believes that this was fortuitous because this greatly helped him in public and legal career, especially when it came to the guidance of Muslims in Congress.

In the pages that follow we see Quaid-e-Azam emerging as a great minaret dominating the skyline of Indian politics. In this book it becomes more than evident that he was much clear about freedom struggle before all others. Jaswant Singh writes:

"What strikes great at this stage is that, when most of his colleagues were not even ready for freedom of India, Jinnah was clearly and forcefully advocating his constitutional ideas for leading India to freedom."

The author has very dispassionately compared Gandhi and Jinnah. The author without mincing words has very beautifully analyzed Mahatma Gandhi's mind set while giving details of the reception at his (Gandhis) arrival in India from South Africa. Jinnah in his presidential address on this occasion welcomed Gandhi on behalf of whole of India

and not on behalf of community and emphasized the need for bringing unity amongst various communities for forcefully putting demands before the British. "This," as Singh puts it, "was the period when the British government, very concerned about Jinnah, his Hindu Muslim unity moves, was endeavoring hard to keep the All India Muslim League away from Indian National Congress."

Gandhi on this reception manifested his timidity by thanking Jinnah for Presiding over a "Hindu gathering". Jaswant Singh writes that this "was an ungracious and discouraging response to Jinnah's warm welcome." Gandhi had not come out of this mindset even years later. Gandhi was curt to Agha Khan in same manner in 1931, when he (Gandhi) told him that he had no "paternal love for Muslims". These remarks had chilled Agha Khan. At another place Singh quotes Gandhi writing to Jinnah, "I find no parallel in history for a body of converts claiming a nation apart from parent stock."

Jinnah, we see had great urge for unity between Hindus and Muslims for achieving greater goal of freedom. The book tells us how arduously Jinnah worked for the Lucknow Pact. It also tells us how after six years he started doubting intentions of Gandhi and Congress. At Nagpur Session of the Congress Jinnah ventured courage of going the rostrum and asking Gandhi what he really meant from Swaraj. In twenties we see communal disturbances becoming a routine. Singh writes that Gandhi in this scenario remained "aloof". The author has very ably captured the developments that took place during twenties and writes about the failure of the Lucknow Jinnah endeavor to bring unity amongst Hindus and Muslims.

The author has very lucidly recounted the happenings at the Congress session at Calcutta that caused "parting of ways". Jaswant Singh writes, "Ultimately this turned Jinnah into becoming the Quaid-e-Azam of Pakistan."

The variability in perception and even difference on important issues between Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi emanates in depth through the pages of this book. Despite having emerged as the greatest mass leader, we on occasions, see Gandhi as an isolated person and Nehru holding the sway. Jaswant Singh writes that "Nehru had virulent dislike for Jinnah." He very subtly digs at Nehru's secularism: "Hindu

culture was allowed to mingle with the notion." The book is also distinct for the frank and fearless discussion on 1937 happenings and failure of the Cabinet Mission. He has evaluated the role of Nehru during the period on touchstone of history. The author brings out how the policies of the Congress and the British not only made Jinnah emerge as the sole spokesman but also as savior of Muslims.

Seen in right perspective, Nehru's role has been catalytic in the birth of Pakistan. It in fact have been the historical forces that saw birth of India and Pakistan in the Sub-continent. As someone very rightly put it, it was not a game of pokers played by some professionals. It had been ten centuries of Muslims that forged a separate identity of Muslims in India. Gandhi, Jinnah, Nehru and Patel were contending with forces bigger than all of them put together. They were more driven by history than by being its makers. If Muhammad Ali Jinnah would not have been there, the historical forces would have thrown up someone else as founder of Pakistan, but for his having mastered statecraft, he was destined to be the father of a nation. Disempowering Disempowered Time has ticked. The clock has ticktocked millions of times since Kashmir started its struggle for restoration of its rights in 1931. It undoubtedly has ticked sixty million times since it entered into a phase of uncertainty after the British packed from the Sub-Continent and sailed across Indian Ocean lock, stock and barrel.

No art, not even black art, necromancy or sorcery can freeze the time.It is the truth...it slips and slips faster; it is the best minds that seize it by striking at right moments and at right places. Many Kashmir leaders took wrong decisions at the wrong times. Majority of them have passed through the portals of death. Many got buried in the pages of history. Some found space only in the footnotes of our history, some totally forgotten. It is just a few that perhaps can pass the judgment of history and will find a permanent niche in the hundreds of thousands of pages of our history.

Kashmir, right from 1925, had its political narratives. Though dominant theme of all narratives has been the restoration of the rights but at different points of time it had different manifestations. But there has not been any substantial change in Kashmir narrative after the birth of India and Pakistan as Independent countries. With all its crests and

troughs, it survived the tides of time. The Kashmir narrative has been far more transparent than the waters in its springs. Notwithstanding the clarity of its narrative, questions many questions are being asked about it. And after Kashmir leadership started talking about resolution of Kashmir in accordance to aspirations of people and abandon the word right to self-determination from their lex, one of the important questions that is being posed is, What the aspirations of Kashmiris are. But before one could address this question many a subsidiary questions have started surfacing that have the potential of becoming sub-texts of the main narrative or even taking a dominant place in it.

The subsidiary question that has recently surfaced has been if we are not back to square one that is to 1931 position when movement for the restoration of the rights to the people of Jammu and Kashmir started. This question gained importance after newspaper carried stories about the discrimination of Kashmiri, that is more than obvious from the majority community in recruitments from the lowest rung to the highest position. The recruitments for various positions made during past many years for the state services including premier Kashmir Administrative Service. On the strength of their ostensible lopsidedness raised doubts and apprehensions in the minds of the people that a conspiracy is being hatched to deny the rightful position to people from the majority community in the state services. The recently issued list of naib tehsildars has provided credibility to the apprehension. Out of 107 selections made against three notifications, 72 are from Jammu and just 30 from Kashmir and five from Ladakh . Out of four Assistant Tourist Officers recruited not a single was taken from Kashmir. Out of 13 junior employment officers selected by the SSB, only a single candidate from the Kashmir valley was recruited. Majority of the twelve others selected for this position were from twin districts of Kathua and Jammu. So has been true about the first ladder to administration, the Junior Clerks. It not only tells a lopsided story but brazen discrimination. If the State Recruitment Board did it very recently, the Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission for it having been over-politicized has been blamed of doing it for past many years. Eyebrows were raised against the Commission for its lopsided selection of officers for the combined services. The combined services are the feeding service for the

Kashmir Administrative Service, the second wrung state bureaucracy. The Combined Service Selections made by the Commission strengthened the apprehensions that the future bureaucracy in the state would be lopsided. Taking the top slots of administration, which comprises Indian Administrative Service officers, it would not be even lopsided but only one-sided.

It was media, more particularly from Kashmir Valley that not only brought out facts and figures before the people but also analyzed the dynamics of the lopsided recruitments. It also debated over the future implications of this new administrative phenomenon. The new phenomenon raises many questions. One, why is it being done? Two, does the government in office understand inherent dangers in such a policy? Or if it is not being done deliberately under a well thought plan? In fact questions crop up within questions, if it is not being done to change the sixty two year old narrative.

I don't have ready answers for these questions and but it seems that debate over the discriminatory recruitments is leaving the columns of the newspapers and entering the mainstream politics of the state. It has already become part of texts of statements of two important leaders, Hurriyat Conference (G) Chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani and Hurriyat Conference (M) Chairman Molvi Umar Farooq. One day after his release from Jail, Geelani, making a mention of stories carried by this paper on this issue expressed his deep felt apprehensions, "with such policies in vogue, no Kashmiri official will be visible in the secretariat in a few years from now." Mirwaiz Umar Farooq termed the discrimination in recruitment as a conspiracy aimed at disempowering Kashmir. He called it a policy against the youth of Kashmir which, he said, will not to be tolerated. It seems the recruitment policy of the government is slowly and steadily finding its place in the main Kashmir narrative, rather adding one more dimension to it. Seen in right historical perspective, the discrimination against Muslims in recruitment to government jobs, debarring Kashmiri Muslims from joining the state army was the main narrative of the struggle started in thirties against autocratic rule by the Muslim Conference which National Conference claims to be its mother organization.

It would not be wrong to draw a parallel between the 2009 and the situation before 1931 that caused mass uprising in the state. About the status of Muslims in civil services before 1931, Muhammad Yusuf Saraf in his book Kashmir Fights for Freedom writes, "It was strange coincidence that with the return of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and other graduates from Aligarh, the Civil Service Recruitment Board which had been recently set up, framed certain rules which do appear to have been intended to prevent entry of Muslims. Sixty percent vacancies were to be filled up by government without any reference to the board; as to remaining forty percent, every candidate was required to deposit a sum of rupees fifty as fee". It was not all, the conditions laid were so harsh that hardly a Muslim could make it a government job. Even Prem Nath Bazaz writes and endorses what Saraf has written, "The subordinate services and the officers were dominated by Hindus, both state subjects and non-state subjects, who would not tolerate parting with even a small portion of this monopoly. They would not allow the Muslims to get their legitimate share (page 108, Inside Kashmir).

The way recruitments are being made in the state, it seems that the state is being driven back to the 1931 position and this being done by none but the National Conference which claims to be the real heir of the Reading Room Party and the Muslim conference.

I don't see the new development whether of the land grabbing or job denial in isolation of the main Kashmir narrative but as part of its main text. It in fact reads, disempowering the disempowered.

Welding Kurriyat

Is it once again the All India Congress and the Muslim League politics at play in Kashmir? This question stirred instantly my mind when I read a statement by Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh that Pakistan was trying to forge unity amongst "Kashmir separatists leaders" and "we should not allow it to happen". The statement made me to revisit almost eight decades of the Kashmir struggle. History tells in bold letters that the tragedy of Kashmir got perpetuated more because of factors from within than outside. It tells that it has been the division in Kashmir leadership more than any other factor that could be held responsible for the death and destruction that visited this land during past sixty two years.

There has been hardly an occasion during past seventy-eight years when Kashmir leaders have not been head-on-collusion with each other at all important junctures of our history. To understand the phenomenon why Kashmir leaders more particularly the Muslim leadership suffered mutation after mutation, there is need to relook at the history of struggle and how the divisive forces created wedges after wedges in Kashmir leadership. For this sorry state of affairs we have been often looking for various alibis. Some see it as "retribution for sins committed by this Aryan race professing Islam." Many attribute it to the egocentricity of Kashmir leaders. Some believe that it is inherent in Kashmir psyche to be led by their enemy posing friends. History tells us that no sooner did the movement against the autocratic rule start taking its shape in Jammu and Kashmir than both the Congress and League leadership started evincing great interest in it with different objectives in mind.

It was the plight of the Muslims that constituted ninety percent population of Jammu and Kashmir that set many Muslims more particularly of Kashmiri origin in the United Punjab to start a movement for restoration against tyrannical anti-Muslim feudal rule in this "country". The Kashmir Freedom Struggle in fact was born at the turn of nineteenth century in Lahore and Amritsar. It started striking its roots in Jammu in 1922 under the leadership of Chowdary Ghulam Abbass. But it attained organized shape only after the birth of Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference in 1931. The birth of the Muslim Conference was an extra-ordinary event; it was for the first time that the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir united under one banner. The birth of this organization attracted the attention of both the Congress and the Muslim League leaders. They looked at its birth from a different perspective. The Muslim League leadership saw it as a movement of the oppressed Muslim population suffering under most inhuman tax system human history has known.

It attracted the attention of the Muslim intelligentsia all over the sub-continent and its support base widened and it went beyond the State, then known as country. It got a tremendous response and support from the Muslim press in Punjab but was tooth and nail opposed by the Hindu press of Punjab.

Lahore became a bastion of Kashmir struggle. To muster support for Kashmir struggle for freedom Muslim intellectuals of Punjab (majority of Kashmir origin) under the leadership of Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal constituted a Kashmir Committee. It was because of the hard labour put in by this Committee that processions and demonstrations all over the Sub-Continent in support of Kashmir Freedom Struggle and against the mayhem of July 13, 1931 were held.

The all India support for the struggle changed the attitude of British Empire towards the State and it started building pressure against the rulers to introduce some reforms in the State for ending plight of the Kashmiri Muslims who were treated "worst than cattle".

It was only after one year after the birth of this organization, cracks started appearing in the Muslim Conference. It got divided. The most populist theory about the division in the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference at this stage has been the differences between Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and Mirwaiz Molvi Muhammad Yusuf Shah over the growing influence of the followers of Ghulam Ahmed Qadyani in the organization. Yet many a historians believe that the "birth of this formidable organization did not augur well with the feudal rulers and

some elite Kashmiri Pandits. The Kashmiri Pandits who were key players in the governance felt threatened at the awakening in the majority community, which mostly comprised an exploited lot of peasantry and workers. The Maharaja Hari Singh became restive and wanted to sabotage it in the beginning only. He, in collaboration with Kashmiri Pandits, started weaving conspiracies against the Muslim Conference."

It was not only the Muslim intelligentsia in India that watched with curiosity the troughs and crests of the awakening in Kashmiri Muslims but even the Congress leadership remained abreast with the developments. The correspondence between Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Prem Nath Bazaz and many other prominent Kashmir Pandits at this period suggest the interest that Congress took in the developments in the state. Some do see hideous hand of Bazaz in this division. Whatever the reasons, this division at the take off stage of the freedom struggle fractured Kashmir Muslim society. Instead of fighting the feudal rulers, the Muslims particularly in Srinagar city started fighting each other. And it was this fracture that we see affecting most of the future course of events that gave birth to Kashmir tragedy.

History testifies that it has been from this stage that the Muslim League ideologues tried to bring unity among Kashmir leaders. This division made Dr. Mohammad Iqbal restless. To forge a unity amongst Kashmiri, he wanted to visit Kashmir but was not allowed. And it was on his behest that intellectuals like Munishi Siraj-u-Din, Prof. Alim-ud-Din and Mohammad Din Fauq visited Kashmir to bring a rapprochement between Sheikh Abdullah and Mirwaiz. But the efforts failed. While Muslim League intelligentsia were endeavouring to bring unity in the Muslim Conference, the Congress leadership were striving to woo the Muslim Conference leadership through Prem Nath Bazaz to its fold and steer the Kashmir movement in a different direction.

The role played by the Muslim Conference from its birth in no way was sectarian but it was reformative. It was fighting for equal rights and economic emancipations for all deprived communities. There was no ostensible reason for renaming this organization as the National Conference and dividing the Muslim Conference and thereby the Muslims of the state. The architect of this division when seen in broader perspective has been the Congress leadership through Prem Nath Bazaz.

This division brought the Muslim League President Muhammad Ali Jinnah to Kashmir to forge unity amongst Kashmir leaders but he failed. While Jinnah was still in Kashmir, Congress leaders deputed the Communists ideologues to Kashmir to consolidate the National Conference ideologically and distance it further from the League. It is intriguing to see the man who engineered the division of the Muslim conference not on the side of Sheikh Abdullah after the division but in the camp of Mirwaiz. Bazaz who played role in the birth of the National Conference after its birth parted ways with Sheikh and joined Mirwaiz. Why?

The Holy Relic Movement in 1964 united Kashmiris together but this unity also proved very short-lived. And at this stage also we see Pakistan President Ayub Khan making an effort to unite Kashmir leaders by deputing his Information Secretary Aga Showkat Ali to Kashmir.

The 1975 Accord again divided Kashmiris and it took fifteen years to forge unity amongst Kashmir leaders and launch the All Parties Hurriyat Conference. How and why this party suffered vertical division has been discussed in this column umpteen times. All the factions of the Hurriyat Conference apparently profess the same political outlook and ideology yet the question that baffles an answer is that if they will ever get united. There can be no denial that there have been efforts to weld various factions of the conglomerate together ever since their division but they failed. There have been efforts from Kashmir Bar Association President to Pakistan President but with no results.

Historically I see no strength in the apprehension of Manmohan Singh about unity in the present Kashmir leadership. And I do not see Pakistan succeeding in that, even if it may be trying. Notwithstanding their espousing the same cause, the fissures in their ranks are unbridgeable ,wide and deep.

I am not optimistic about the unity amongst Kashmir leadership. As a student of Kashmir history I see the failure of collective leadership in Kashmir inevitable. There is no evidence in the history of nations where struggles for restoration of rights including the right to self-determination and independence has been led and won by weird conglomerates and collective leadership. It has been but for the diversity of interests in the collective leadership in Kashmir that many important mass movements having the potential of turning the tide failed.

In this bizarre scenario it is the historical forces that throws up one leader like Mahatma Gandhi or Jinnah to lead their nations to success. I foresee majority of clerics and leaders getting relegated to footnotes of history.

Looking For Double

I had a dream. Like any other struggling writer I had a dream to write a magnum opus. Having written for more than forty years on Kashmir and having interviewed most of the major leaders I thought that it was my fort. It is no ordinary subject. Kashmir is a major subject as someone has rightly said that when you write about a major subject it is like getting another university education. Doing a book on Kashmir is really getting another university education. I was not interested in writing on culture or literature but on politics. I was groping in the dark, Kashmir problem is vast subject having varied shades and dimensions and what virgin subject should I take up. There are many books on struggle against the feudal autocracy. Some biased, some half-truths and some biased. Truly there are many missing links in it like why and how Muslim Conference got divided, why was it renamed as the National Conference. There are many a missing links in June 1947 to 27 October developments that call for being retold. There are books by best minds on the genesis of the dispute. There are books on behind the scene happenings that led to landing of troops and vivisection of strategically most important state in South Asia. There are monographs on the strategic importance of this state caught up in the web of four nuclear countries. There seemed no major subject I could write about.

Some two decades back I read a book by Raj Mohan Gandhi, Understanding the Muslim Mind. The book is about eight Indian great Muslims, Sayyid Ahmed Khan (1817-1898), Muhammad Iqbal (1876-1938), Muhammad Ali (1876-1931), Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1867-1948), Fazlul Haq (1873-1962), Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958), Liquate Ali Khan (1895-1951) and Zakir Hussain (1897-1969). These eight Muslim leaders born in nineteenth century did shape destiny of the Muslims of the sub-continent during twentieth century. These men by

all stretch of imagination can be called as great men of the twentieth century. I thought of doing a similar book that would provide an insight into Kashmir mind. I did identify eight political leaders I had an opportunity of having watched from very close quarters. But the question that haunted my mind if any of these eight I picked up could be called as a great man. I tried for looking someone in twentieth century Kashmir who could be bracketed with these great Indian Muslims. Did I find one, I leave you guessing but to understand the mind of Kashmir leaders I did marathon interviews ranging from an hour to six hours with more than hundred contemporary political workers and leaders not only having closely worked with these leaders but also stood like a rock by their side.

The eight people Raj Mohan Gandhi has written about are really great minds and it would have been novice of me to find a replica of them in contemporary Kashmir. But to find out if any one of the leaders I had selected for my study could be placed in proximity of them would also have been foolhardiness. Other than initiating me to go deeper into the factors that contributed to Kashmir tragedy, understanding the role of our leaders in perpetuating this tragedy, the book by Gandhi inspired me to delve deeper into the lives of great Indian Muslim leaders. Every one of the eight Muslim leader, the book is about, have a distinctive note in the Muslim history of the region. Out of his list of eight, I see Muhammad Ali Jinnah as the greatest for his "indomitable will" and as very beautifully put by Stanly Wolpert, "His place of primacy in Pakistan's history looms like a minaret over the achievements of all his contemporaries in the Muslim league". Some of his critics like Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre who wrote many bad things about him and called him "a man of towering vanity" had to write that "a more improbable leader of India's Moslem could hardly be imagined.. He had been able to achieve the remarkable feat of securing the allegiance of the vast majority of India's Muslims without being able to articulate more than a few sentences in their traditional language-Urdu".

Most of biographers of Mr. Jinnah including the latest one by former Indian Foreign Minister, Jaswant Singh have highlighted his statesmanship, political insight, integrity, statecraft. Some religious zealots have

often been looking for a lesser Muslim in him, preferring to call him a non-practicing Muslim. I did not look for a Jinnah among the eight I selected for my book as described by Bevereley Nicholas in his book Verdict on India, " Tall, thin and elegant, with a monocle on grey silk cord, and a stiff and white color which he wears in the hottest weather, he suggests a gentleman of Spain, a diplomat of old school." I had an opportunity of finding Jinnah outside his known biographies. Leader. I find Jinnah, that hitherto remained eclipsed from people, in two articles on him one by his sister Fatima Jinnah, A business Becomes A Barrister, and another by Sadat Husain Manto, Jinnah Sahi. (I have read translation by Khalid Hassan).

This man, whose "life was a model of order and discipline," in the words of French authors of the Freedom at Midnight, "even the phlox and petunias of his garden marched out from his mansion straight, had great passion for newspapers. He had them mailed to him from all over the world." His sister writes about him,"His eager mind was keen to benefit by his visit to England at that time (youth) when spirit of British Liberalism was making such profound impact on the minds of people. He adopted the typically English habit of reading carefully his morning newspapers as he awoke and completed his breakfast." About his joining the Lincoln's Inn, Fatima Jinnah quotes his brother having said, "It was during the days that I was busy studying for my "Little Go" (entrance test), I was determined to pass. I may say I was confident. I thought of seeing the various Inns in London and meeting students studying there in. My inquiries and discussions made me decide for another Inn than Lincol's. But then I saw the name of the great Prophet Muhammad engraved on the main entrance of Lincoln's Inn among the great law givers of the world. So I made a sort of Minnat vow that I would join Lincoln's Inn." She in this article gives lots of details about how the Quaid spent his student days and how he lived an austere life.

Manto's article on Jinnah makes more interesting reading about the life style of this great leader, his relations with his sisters other than Miss Fatima Jinnah, his servants and drivers. Quaid had three sisters. One of them Rehmat Jinnah lived at Chowpati. Her husband did not earn much. Jinnah Sahib would send her some money, every month, in closed envelop through his driver. Quaid Azam played billiards and

would hit with precision. Manto writes, in politics, Quaid was equally meticulous. He never made hasty decision. As in billiards, he would examine the situation from every angle and only move when he was sure he would get it right the first time.

The article based on Manto's interview with famous pre-partition actor, Azad, who worked as Quaid-e-Azam's chauffer, shows that Quaid was great not by virtue of conjuring a nation state through his determination, but he was great in his day to day living also. He did not like idle talk but was greatly good to his servants and his drivers.

This article about Quaid not only belies his detractors but also provides insight into personal life of a man who in his life never said, "Sorry," and about whom the general belief is that his domestic life was a mystery and will remain so.

Not through the voluminous biographers, but also through American and British historians and the article by Manto on Jinnah, I found, that the leaders I selected to write about were not even a shade of this great man. History Has Lessons It is a season of marriages. I am not talking of political marriages that are in full bloom during the elections but I am talking about mundane wedlocks that bind two humans together. This week I was at a marriage party. It was long wait for the bridegroom. More than two hours idle wait, and during these idle waits one has to listen either to religious discourses that often end up in acrimonious debates without reaching to an agreement on the rituals or a sermon against extravaganzas in marriages. While waiting for the bridegroom I was a captive audience to a monologist religious zealot believing that his understanding of religion was the only right one. Much before I could plug my ears with my fingers a lawyer punctured his monologue by talking about the contemporary political scene in the state. He had a plethora of questions on the subjects I had touched over a period of time in my column. What was bothering him more was that the concepts of forum politics and collective leadership were not going to help in ending political uncertainty nor was it going to bring tangible political dividends that would satisfy urges and aspirations of the majority. He was in agreement with me that there was no example worth quoting in the history where a collage of political parties would have led any movement to a logical conclusion. He was in agreement with

me that it was one leader, one party and one goal that had led all major struggles and movements in the world to logical end. His grouse was that I often in my column raised issues and posed questions but did not suggest solutions nor did I answer the questions raised. He had a question for me and so had a university time friend a senior bureaucrat. The question revolved around the statement made by Home Minister, P. Chidambaram regarding likelihood of initiating a dialogue with Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, APHC (M) leader. The question sounded well and I could start a whole discourse on it touching its hidden and apparent dimension. Like most writers, believing that as someone has said, I seem to be smarter in print than in person. In fact, I am smarter when I'm writing." I instead of answering the question and giving an elaborate discourse thought of taking up his question as subject for this week column.

The proposed talks between New Delhi and APHC (Mirwaiz) raise many questions. one, has there been change of heart at New Delhi barely a month after Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh denounced the APHC and other leaders outside it as irrelevant, two, what is it that now makes them relevant, three, is New Delhi really serious in holding a dialogue with Mirwaiz led Hurriyat Conference, fourth, what can be the agenda for talks and fifth, if an agreement is reached between New Delhi and the leadership, will it be in consonance with their demand for allowing the people to exercise their right to self-determination.

There are many a stories in the Kashmir political circle of New Delhi about the proposed talks between Kashmir leaders and New Delhi. One of the important stories is that there has not been much of a change in New Delhi's evaluation of Kashmir leaders as manifested in the Prime Minister's statement and it also reflected the understanding of the establishment including the PMO. If the grapevine in the capital is to be believed it is a former union minister having a friend or two in the APHC(M) who is engaged on the track two for setting a thaw in the relation between the APHC (M) and New Delhi. It is a different question if he is a self-appointed interlocutor between New Delhi and Srinagar or has go on signal from the power centers in the capital.

The question of proposed talks of the APHC (M) has more than what meets the eye. It needs to be looked at both in the contemporary

and the historical perspectives. The engagement of New Delhi with Mirwaiz is not something new. The behind scene dialogue between New Delhi and Kashmir leaders started before 1993, the birth of the multi-party combine. It would not be stretching thus far to say that it were these behind the scene talks between New Delhi and Kashmir leaders during their detentions that caused the birth of the conglomerate. Scores of NGOs or groups of intellectuals including some human righ activists who have been talking to APHC since the start of armed "struggle" have not been doing it without blessings from New Delhi. It were both the efforts of various NGO activists and back channel engagements that paved way for opening of front channel dialogue between the APHC(M) and New Delhi. The Kashmir leaders having chosen to be called as moderates for not adhering to the demand of plebiscite have been meeting leaders of both the NDA and UPA governments. The last meeting between six leaders of the APHC under the leadership of Mirwaiz and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was held in September, 2005 at New Delhi. It was nothing but a photo-session. The APHC (M) had not done any spadework before meeting and nor had it set an agenda for the meeting. It was a flop show. The prime minister asked the delegation to come next time with some concrete suggestions that government of India could consider. There was no direct meeting between New Delhi and Srinagar leaders after September 2005. However Prime Minister asked these leaders to join round table conference of all parties mostly those believing in the finality of accession of the State with Indian Union.

The question that apparently baffles an answer is what is it now that has made New Delhi to drop hints to the "moderates" for resumption of a dialogue. Much before coming to this question and looking at the new developments with regard to Kashmir I am reminded of the dialogue between New Delhi and the National Conference in fifties that ended up in signing of Delhi agreement. The agreement survived just one year and debates about it along with other factors landed Sheik in jail for eleven years. The dialogue that started in seventies between the Plebiscite Front and New Delhi culminated into Indira-Sheikh Accord of 1975. The accord did bring Sheikh Abdullah to power and also assured power for his scions but historically it is not seen as an achievement of Kashmir leadership but as its surrender. To understand this

surrender there is need to read between the lines the factors that led to it.

The dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971 dampened the initiative of Kashmir leaders fighting for the cause of right to self-determination. This followed by an agreement between India and Pakistan at Simla and Kashmir problem was relegated to the background. The Problem of the State of Jammu and Kashmir in the words of Alastair Lamb ceased to be an "active territorial dispute". The agreement between India and Pakistan did make a mention of Kashmir and Pakistan after the agreement did reiterate that it did not compromise on Kashmir. But Z.A. Bhutto did throw a challenge to India by stating, "It was up to India to demonstrate to the world opinion that the inhabitants of State of Jammu and Kashmir were willing to accept what India had to offer them." The government of India took a cue from it and started a dialogue with Kashmir leaders. It first involved the smaller organization and then by playing stick and carrot policy also involved the Plebiscite Front. It may be a matter of debate if the smaller parties were trapped in the booby-trap wittingly or not, but the movement for right to self-determination did suffer an erosion with minor players like the Jammu and Kashmir Jamat-e-Islamia, the Political Conference and Srinagar based Awami Action Committee joining directly and indirectly in the electoral process and isolating the Plebiscite Front that had boycotted the elections.

It was not the lack of negotiating skills in the Front leadership that failed it in making New Delhi agree to its terms and conditions but it started a dialogue from a weak position that culminated into an accord with zero achievement. The accord for its inherent weaknesses and required guarantees hardly survived for a period of seven months, then it was story of compromises for remaining in power.

The Kashmir problem diplomatically and politically today is on a stronger pedestal than it was after 1971. The APHC (M) before entering into a dialogue with New Delhi will have to realize that it was no more on the slippery ground of 9/11 situation. But instead it will have to reevaluate its strength and make its relevance felt. The dialogue with New Delhi held in isolation of other leaders outside its ambit will not be of much consequence.

To see the dialogue with New Delhi reaching to a logical conclusion, it will have to work for arriving at a broader consensus with the other faction of the conglomerate, organization outside it and the combatant leadership.

Since the proposed dialogue is on the front channel, it should not be held in hush-hush manner but transparently. The agenda for dialogue with New Delhi should be without any ambiguity and it should have people's approval. The approval should be sought in from the people in a session meant for the purpose.

OIC Beyond Talkshop

Those of us who know Kashmir story know it very well that it has been oscillating between hope and despair. And sometimes it has been the hope that has dominated the political scene and sometimes it has been the despair that overwhelmed leadership of the land. It is history that whenever the Kashmir problem remained under sharp international focus, hopes for its resolution brightened and whenever it failed to be talked about in the international forums, despair has overwhelmed the Kashmir leadership espousing the "cause of right to self-determination" or demanding holding of a plebiscite under the aegis of the United Nations Security Council. It is also history that the despair has often led the leadership to desperation that dug Kashmir not only into the hole of uncertainty but pushed it into the whirlpool of tragedies. Looking objectively at various agreements and accords signed by Kashmir leaders during past sixty two years they were not born out of their political judgment, foresightedness, sagacity or astuteness but were result of their desperation. It has been the disappointment, faileur in mobilizing the international opinion that has often led them to negotiating table. If one takes the Indira-Sheikh Agreement of 1975, that brought Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah back to power after having led the movement for right for self-determination for twenty two years. As a classical example, it did not happen out of the political sagacity of the leadership but out of desperation caused because of Pakistan's dismemberment. The statements like the "the dispute with India was not over quality but quantum of accession", made by the Front leadership after Pakistan's crushing defeat in 1971 was more out of convenience than conviction. It needs no explanation that the six point accord signed by the emissaries of Mrs. Gandhi and Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah not only crashed after just seven months but also failed to end political uncertainty in the state. The post 1989 situation that saw Kashmir plunged into most hor-

rendous phase of death and destruction in its history sufficiently explains that any agreement born out of desperation and expediency cannot be long lasting.

Kashmir leaders, a chunk of them is today also caught up in the web of despair and so is a section of academia. Some top academicians whether speaking at school toy exhibition or at a seminar on ending of political uncertainty in the state have been stating that the United Nations does not recognize Kashmir as a dispute and whatever resolutions were passed by the United Nations Security Council are nothing but scraps of paper". They have been very tacitly advocating statuesque. The perception of some leaders in the "freedom camp" about practicability of these resolutions has also undergone a sea change and they are convinced that these resolutions have no inherent strength for resolving the Kashmir problem. Most of the UN resolutions, they believe, have lost the sting. Pakistan as one of the leaders told me was "sinking in the morass of terrorism" and in such a situation there is need for finding out a "safe passage" from the "depressing situation". There is undoubtedly a section of important and influential leadership like Syed Ali Geelani that steadfastly believes in a settlement based on the right to self-determination as the only viable solution.

Notwithstanding uncanny, uncertain and weird political situation on the home turf, the Kashmir problem has once again shot into the international focus. There has been many a significant developments relating Kashmir at the international level that has given a big diplomatic push to the sixty three year old political problem. China caused diplomatic embarrassment to New Delhi by introducing separate visas for people of Jammu and Kashmir travelling to the country. The issue remained under bright focus during the 64th session of the UN General Assembly. The Libyan President, Muammar Gaddafi called upon India and Pakistan to grant complete independence to the Jammu and Kashmir. The most important developments that took place with regard to Kashmir on the side lines of the annual meeting of the United Nations have been the OIC appointing a special envoy on Kashmir.

I may not in this column join a debate with our academicians who have been reiterating that the United Nation does not recognize Jammu and Kashmir as "disputed state" or I may not equally initiate a discus-

sion with one or two leaders in the "pro-freedom camp" believing the United Nations having lost relevance for Kashmir or the resolutions passed by this organization having no inherent inertia in them for resolving the Kashmir problem. But the appointments of envoys by the OIC and the United States demands to be looked in right perspective. It needs to be seen as how long the envoys can be effective in making India and Pakistan agree for ending political uncertainty in Jammu and Kashmir for bringing in lasting peace in the region. The United States ever since its having co-sponsored the resolution guaranteeing right to self-determination to people of Jammu and Kashmir in 1948 has not by and large changed its stand. The Obama government after its takeover emphasized the need for resolution of Kashmir problem as it was the gateway for peace in South-Asia. It had also indicated appointment of former President Bill Clinton as special envoy for the state. In many previous columns, I did discuss as how the idea got defeated and how Kashmir was dropped from the brief of Mr. Richard Holbrooke. Kashmir is not part of brief of Mr. Holbrooke is a reality but reports that have been emanating after US envoy meeting India and Pakistan leadership have been sufficiently suggesting that he has been discussing Kashmir with both the countries. If reports are to be believed the United State is rethinking about appointing fulltime Envoy for Kashmir for facilitating India and Pakistan for hammering a solution. Notwithstanding Kashmir problem not echoing any more with same vehemence in the Security Council as it used to be from 1947 to 1971, the appointment of the Special Envoy by the OIC and proposed appointment of Envoy by US for Kashmir does imply that the issue does continue to hold international dimensions.

There are indications that it is slowly slipping out of the bilateral fold of India and Pakistan. Ever since APHC was given the Observer status and the Contact Group for Jammu and Kashmir was established, Chairman of APHC (M) Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Kashmir Diaspora leaders more particularly Executive Director of Kashmiri American Council Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai have been pleading for greater involvement of OIC countries in the resolution of Kashmir problem in keeping with history of the dispute. These leaders at the September 2009 meet besides pleading for appointment of Special Envoy for Jammu and Kash-

mir emphasized need for persuading the GOI to initiate Kashmir specific CBMS.

The objective behind the appointment of Special Envoy as emphasized by the OIC Secretary General, Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu in his address to the Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir on 28 September in New York is making effective use of the influence of some OIC member countries to prevail on India to avail itself the offer of Good offices made by OIC for improving relation between India and Pakistan that could facilitate resolution of the core-issue. It is true the appointment of Abdullah Bin Abdul Rahaman Al Bakr hailing from Saudi Arabia as special envoy indicates growing interest of the Muslim World in the resolution of the sixty three year old problem. It is undoubtedly a watershed in the history of this organization that represents one third of the population of the world. But, there remains an important question about the effectiveness of the OIC Special Envoy in influencing the Government of India for finding an amicable and just solution of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Given the record of the organization since its birth in 1969, and its role in the global political scenario, it has earned the dubious titles like "Talk Shop", and "chatterbox" and people generally are skeptical about it achieving much unless the major Muslim countries use their influence to make the appointment of Special Envoy a success by prevailing upon New Delhi.

It is true that the 57- strong group of Muslim Countries has been failing in agreeing on a common charter but there is silver lining in its appointing Special Envoy on Jammu and Kashmir and it has been a unanimous decision of this organization next to the United Nations. The decision of appointing a special envoy on Kashmir does suggest that Kashmir has started assuming as good importance as Palestine for the Muslim World.

Given the complexity of the issue the appointment of Special Envoy by the OIC needs to be seen in right perspective as facilitator and not as meddler in the affairs of the two countries. Dialogue Where To?

It is cliché that despite being worn-out retains its sheen. The word dialogue that deafeningly has resounded for decades in the sub-continent is back in currency. It is back perhaps with different connotations than one would read it in the past. New Delhi last week invited for talks

all shades of Kashmir leaders. Though it did not spell out the agenda for the talks but there have been inferences that the offer is for finding solution of the Kashmir problem. It is again clouded with lot of haze if the dialogue with Kashmir leaders would be in tandem or in isolation of the paused dialogue with Pakistan.

The offer despite positive response from pro-India political parties and a faction of the Hurriyat Conference has created a lot of cacophony in political circles in the state and outside. Some political circles in the state have been identifying pit and potholes in the offer and some have been trying to find positive shades in it.

There is no history worth mentioning of dialogue between New Delhi and Srinagar for finding a permanent solution of the Kashmir dispute outside the UN resolution. The dialogue between the National Conference and New Delhi in fifties that culminated in the Delhi Agreement of 1952 cannot be seen as a dialogue for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute. There was no dispute between the National Conference and New Delhi over the accession of the state with the Indian Union. It was a dialogue for defining and delineating powers of the state and the centre. The dialogue between the envoys of Sheikh Abdullah and Mrs. Gandhi in seventies was not about deciding the future of the state outside the UN resolution. Sheikh Abdullah after entering into dialogue with New Delhi did not dispute the accession of the state with India but disputed over the "quantum" of the accession. There in fact has been no dialogue between Kashmir leadership and New Delhi for deciding the question of accession of the state outside the UN resolution and whatever dialogue has taken place on deciding the future of Jammu and Kashmir during past sixty years has been between India and Pakistan. To understand how far the proposed dialogue between Kashmir leadership can help in finding a solution of the problem there is need to relook in right perspective at the sixty years history of bilateral and multilateral dialogue between New Delhi and Islamabad. There also need to understand if the dialogue between the state leadership and New Delhi can bring out a solution of the Kashmir problem or it will work as a catalyst or as retarder in making the two countries agree upon a just solution of the problem.

It is history that the relations between the two countries have re-

mained hinged to the Kashmir dispute. The relations have been vacillating between diplomacy and war; war and diplomacy. The date and fact of accession of the state; wars and diplomacy; mediations and interventions and dialogues and peace process that have been hallmarks of sixty years relation between India and Pakistan are interconnected. It would be difficult to delink one from another. It would be equally difficult to look at one aspect in isolation of the other for understanding complexity of Kashmir problem. The better way for understanding the issues in right perspective would be to take a holistic view.

There has been a lot of debate going on amongst historians over the instrument of accession with taking it as a matter of fact and some disputing its very existence. There has been a lot of debate over landing of troops in Kashmir in 1947. Some casting doubts over a consensus amongst Indian leadership on question of sending troops to Kashmir. The discussion over these issues is important to the history of the problem but may not be of much importance in the context of finding a solution of the problem in the changed global scenario. But what is important to note is that the parleys between India and Pakistan for finding solution of Kashmir problem started immediately after its birth.

History tells, while India was engaged in fight against armed men from tribal areas and the rebels from the army of Maharaja Hari Singh in the state, a consensus about holding of a plebiscite for determining the future of the state had already emerged. In the words of Aliaster Lamb, "Thus when Kashmir broke out the plebiscite was already established as the official Indian solution to this order of problem." Nehru had made India's policy on this count amply clear to Prime Minister Atlee through a telegram. New Delhi proposition of deciding future of Jammu and Kashmir was endorsed by Governor General of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah on 28 October 1947.

This was followed by lots of parleys between the two countries. "From October 28 to December 1947 there took place a series of India-Pakistan discussions over Kashmir question. The meetings took place at all levels. On 8 November 1947 a meeting between two very senior officials, V.P. Menon and Chaudary Muhammad Ali took place and a detailed scheme for holding plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir was worked out. Lamb holds that this had apparent approval of Indian

Deputy Prime Minister Vallabbhai Patel. How to arrange a plebiscite in the state engaged the attention of India and Pakistan leaders. Notwithstanding Pundit Jawaharlal's "reservations" about foreign intervention, the two countries debated and discussed the employment of British officers or the United Nations for the purpose. Some historians hold the view that there was an agreement between India and Pakistan to take Kashmir problem to the United Nations.

On 1 January 1948, India brought the Kashmir issue to the attention of the United Nations. India's representative at U.N. Mr. P.P. Pilli lodged a complaint under article 35 of United Nations charter. Historians both in India and outside think that referring of the issue was a colossal blunder. Akbar called it as "most serious error". "Had this issue been settled one or another way on the battlefield, the world would have forgotten it," Writes Prof. Robert Wirsing, " But it was not decided in the battlefield; instead, it was placed on the agenda of the United Nations." The United Nations to the disappointment of Indian delegations adopted resolutions guaranteeing right to self-determination to the people of the state. It also devised mechanism that would enable people of the State to exercise this right. Debates over these resolutions continued and from time to time many other resolutions were passed in the august body strengthening the resolutions passed in 1948 and 1949. It was not only inside the august house that Kashmir was debated and discussed but efforts were made to find out alternative solutions. The United Nations from 1950 to 1958 appointed three Commissions for finding out a solution of the problem. These commissions with their best efforts and pragmatic approach failed to resolve the dispute. It was not only the United Nations or many other friendly countries of India and Pakistan that worked hard to find an amicable solution of Kashmir problem. India and Pakistan leaders constantly met to iron out the differences. Prime Minister of India and Prime Minister of Pakistan met in July in Karachi. Then another meeting was held between them in August 1953 at New Delhi. This meeting was seen a step forward and in this meeting appointment of Plebiscite Administrator by the end of 1954 was agreed upon and an expert committee was appointed for the purpose but no agreement was signed. Six rounds of talks took place between India Foreign Minister, Swaran Singh and Pakistan Foreign Min-

ister, Z.A. Bhutto between December 1962 to May 1963.

The dialogue between India and Pakistan for resolving Kashmir despite having suffered troughs on occasions has all along continued. Even a cursory look at sixty years of Kashmir history reveals that Kashmir started as a bilateral issue it assumed international dimensions after it found its way to the United Nations. It also assumed multilateral dimension at many junctures with some powerful countries working as mediators.

It is also a sad story that the dialogue between India and Pakistan whether on bilateral or multilateral levels during past sixty three years has not helped in finding an amicable solution of the dispute that has brought them to battle fields on umpteen occasions. It is in itself a subject why dialogues during past sixty years failed to find a solution of the problem. Is it one or the other country betraying the historical realties about the dispute that have defeated a solution or it is the lack of seriousness shown by the international community towards the region that has so far perpetuated the problem. Given to the dismal fate of India and Pakistan dialogue so far the question arises where would a dialogue between APHC or Kashmir leaders and New Delhi lead to in case it is held for deciding future status of the state. It may be too early to predict about a solution but it is a step forward in case New Delhi invites Kashmir leaders for talks for discussing future of the state in the context of history of the dispute. Waiting For 2010

It tells a story. The moment I sit at my desk in the morning the bookcase in my carrel tells me a story- the story of sixty three years of pain and agony. The spines of the books on the shelves read: the Wounded Valley, Kashmir in Chains, the Wounded Paradise, the Verdant Valley in Flames, the Prison Stories, Wailing Freedom, the Cindering Chinars, the Freedom Search, Birth of Tragedy, Kashmir the Disputed Legacy, the Trauma of Kashmir, Incomplete Partition, Danger in Kashmir, Kashmir Roots of Conflict, My Kashmir Conflict and the Prospects of Enduring Peace, Kashmir the Untold Story, Echoes of Freedom, Curfewed Night and many other heart rendering titles of Urdu publications. On glancing through the books on the racks in my library it often haunts my mind, if the spines would ever read: The Bruised Valley Healed, the Valley Blooms Again, the Trauma Ends and Kashmir Resolved.

The wicker basket in a corner of my carrel that I use for putting old newspapers sprang a hope this Sunday morning when I picked up couple of old newspapers dated October 14, 2009, October 15, 2009, October 21, 2009 and October 22, 2009 and relooked at the lead stories in them. The lead stories read different than one is familiar with. They read: Resolve Kashmir: Omar Tells Delhi, You Cannot Divorce JK from its Politics; Kashmir on Table Quiet Dialogue, Unique Solution: Chidambaram, Mum on Atoot Ang; From media hub, Geelani seeks troops withdrawal and Unique Solution to K-issue. Talks to be result oriented: Omar, Admits There Were mistakes in the Past. These banner headlines and headlines when read between the lines not only indicate change of mood in New Delhi but also provide many a leads for looking at the political developments that in all likelihood are going to dominate 2010. There are many a significant points in the statements made by Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah during past week and Home Minister, P. Chidambaram during his recent visit to Srinagar. Looking at the statements made by Omar Abdullah in perspective of the statements made by Farooq Abdullah as Chief Minister (1996-2002), the statements of the present Chief Minister have lot of reconciliatory tone in them. Farooq Abdullah, notwithstanding being recognized as suave and soft-spoken when he joined politics spoke in terrifyingly belligerent language. He often talked of waging a war against Pakistan and bombarding town and villages of the state on the other side of the line. He talked of bulldozing those who demanded freedom. He often repeated at high pitch that the "accession of the state to India was irrevocable" and if there was a dispute it was about the AJK. In the middle of his tenure as Chief Minister in tune with the thinking of a US think tank and mood in New Delhi he saw resolution of Kashmir in making the artificial line drawn across the state (LOC) as a temporary measure to ensure ceasefire between India and Pakistan army as an international border. He at that time failed to understand the perpetuating cause for the problem could not become resolution of the problem. It is historical reality that the Chief Ministers of the state lost their political idioms and phraseology after 1953 and ever since that year they have been speaking in the language of New Delhi. The Chief Ministers who dared to speak in their

own political idioms were led to the exit door. It has not only been Farooq Abdullah who during his incumbency as Chief Minister of the state spoke Delhi's language, so has been true of all other Chief Ministers who succeeded him after 2002. The Kashmir doctrine of New Delhi underwent a change after it initiated a composite dialogue with Pakistan and held intense talks on track two on General Mascara's four point formula. The formula spoke of demilitarization, porous border, self-rule and joint management. This formula when seen in broader perspective was akin to the formula worked out by New Delhi's think tank, Centre for Policy Research in early nineties when most of the government institution in the state had crumbled (See India- Pakistan and Kashmir by Pran Chopra published in 1993). The PDP Chief Minister while talking of self-rule, porous Loc, "demilitarization," which to him did not mean demilitarization as mentioned in the UN resolution but redeployment or garrisoning of army, was reflecting the then thinking in New Delhi.

The statements of Omar Abdullah, I have quoted above, can also not be looked in isolation from thinking in New Delhi about Kashmir. In the context of the Chief Minister's statement it becomes important to understand if New Delhi's thinking has changed and if it really is serious about ending political uncertainty in Jammu and Kashmir. The statement made by Home Minister during his visit as very rightly commented by this newspaper and as quoted by prominent Pakistan newspaper the daily times was different than the routine one. "He did not complain of abysmal law and order situation in the state nor did he talk of growing threats from across the border. There were no thunderous threats in his speeches for the dissenting political voices in the state, instead they cascaded with rapprochements and reconciliations. He not only talked of holding dialogue with all shades of political opinion including "separatists" leadership but he was highly positive in admitting that Jammu and Kashmir had a unique geographical location and unique history. And there was need for finding an honorable solution of the problem acceptable to vast majority of people. Home Minister was right in stating that any solution that fails to recognize the uniqueness of the problem will not work."

The Home Minister talking about finding an indigenous solution to the problem speaks about New Delhi's response to the models about the resolution of Kashmir problem talked about at the international level by many think tanks. There has been lot of debate going for past couple of years for finding out a solution of the problem outside the primary model contained in the United Nations resolutions that is allowing people to exercise their choice through ballot under aegis of the United Nations. The secondary models that are being debated in these forums include: " 1. Airland Island Model, 2. Trieste Model, 3. Andorra Model, 4. Northern Ireland Model, 5. Faith-Based Reconciliation Model, 6. South Tyrol Model, 7. Sudan Model, 8. Somaliland Model, 9. Nepalese Model, 10. Conflict Transformation.

True, none of these models caught imagination of Kashmir leaders. These were discussed in some media circles and forums in Srinagar but mostly they were talked about in Kashmir conference organized by Kashmir Diaspora Centers in Washington, London and Brussels. These models also were discussed by India and Pakistan think tanks. "In 2007 these models were discussed in an important conference on Kashmir by the Institute of Strategic Studies and Kashmir Institute of International Relations. The conference was attended by experts from India, Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir. In this conference three models were recommended as basis for the resolution of Kashmir which included 1. The Northern Ireland Model 2. the Faith-Based Reconciliation Model 3. The Conflict Transformation Model. Out of these models the most discussed and debated model was the Northern Ireland Model. But none of these models found any serious takers in India, Pakistan or Jammu and Kashmir. The only formula that was debated, discussed and dismissed in Jammu and Kashmir was the Four Point Formula. The Home Minister during his press conference at Srinagar broadly hinted at evolving a solution outside the already available models on conflict resolutions. He also hinted at evolving a consensus model that would be acceptable to the vast majority of people of the state.

True, he offered dialogue to all political parties including those demanding right to self-determination as envisaged in the UN resolution but at the same time spoke of quiet diplomacy and quite dialogue till contours of a solution of the problem emerge. The quiet diplomacy,

he talked of, suggest, behind the scene talks rather than a direct dialogue. It seems that the year 2010 compared to 2009 would be politically hectic and more vibrant. The Kashmir leadership more particularly the dissenting leaders shall have to tread cautiously with sagacity and pragmatism rather than rushing hastily for getting a berth in first row or remaining soaked in emotionalism. The Hurriyat Conference (M) more or less failed to analyze the niceties and nuances of the statement of the Home Minister and hurriedly announced its decision of entering into a dialogue with New Delhi without even getting an offer. The Home Minister's statement when read in perspective of the failure of all previous initiatives in the state indicates that New Delhi this time does not want to hurry through the dialogue process under the arc of media gaze but work out a formula that would not fail on the touch stone of durability but lead to some logical conclusions.

Holding of dialogue on track two for evolving a consensus formula for finding a resolution of the problem should not be a taboo for any of the organization whether bracketed as hardcore or moderate but it should be taken as a welcome sign. Intellectuals Have a Role Today is 9th November. This day often reminds me of Allama Dr. Mohammad Iqbal not only as the greatest poet of the East or his creative engagement with the conceptual paradigm of modernism at a sophisticated philosophical level through his prose writings, his Urdu and Persian poetry which is the best embodiment of poetically mediated thought, squarely in the traditional continuity of Islamic literature and perhaps the finest flowering of wisdom poetry, or contemplative poetry or inspired poetry in the modern times, but for his founding of the Kashmir struggle for freedom. It was he and Muhammad Din Fauq with many other intellectuals of Kashmiri origin settled in Lahore who played a significant role not only in sowing the seeds of freedom in Kashmir (J&K), but also providing intellectual content to it. It was this intellectual content that became the driving force for young Kashmiris studying in Lahore and Aligarh to struggle against the oppressive and tyrant autocratic rule. The birth of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and it fighting a battle royal against the feudal autocracy cannot be understood in isolation of this intellectual input. It is in itself a subject that once the struggle against autocracy came under the influence

of yet another intellectual movement that it not only lost its contents, but gave birth to what is called as Kashmir tragedy. Had the movement for freedom being insulated against the communist influences perhaps the state would not have soaked in blood for past sixty two years. It is a matter of study for scholars in the Universities how Kashmir movement lost its moorings and ended in a tragedy. However, his poetry and prose writing undoubtedly will continue to be a lodestar for the generations to come.

But today in the emerging political scenario in the state I feel there is need for as good an intellectual input as was provided by the Iqbal and his associates to Kashmir struggle at its inception. There is a lot of trumpeting about a dialogue between New Delhi and Srinagar. The pro-right to self-determination Hurriyat Conference (M) has indicated that it was going to join hands with Pro-India, Jammu and Kashmir National Conference and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). The three may form a coalition and convince New Delhi for holding fresh elections in the state during 2010 for some "interim arrangement, that could be precursor for the "self-rule" or "autonomy" or a sausage of the two.

Given the experiences of the Delhi Agreement and Kashmir Accord of 1975, the question that needs to be pondered over and debated by intelligentsia in Jammu and Kashmir, India and Pakistan is, can any political sausage become a permanent solution of a problem that has been a thorn in the neck of people in the sub-continent. It is true that Kashmir intelligentsia largely lack intellectual honesty and many in the tradition of Dr. Faustus have bartered their souls for having a "glimpse of the Helen of Troy", but there is still a section of them whose conscience is intact and this section of intelligentsia needs not only call a spade a spade but contribute for finding a lasting and just solution of the festering problem.

In view of failure of months together, track two talks, indirect or direct talks between Kashmir leaders and New Delhi, there is need as very rightly put by a "pro-freedom leader," for creating a core group of intelligentsia in the state that could debate and deliberate upon the framework for any kind of meaningful talks, proximity, track-two, triangular or trilateral. To see peaceful resolution of Kashmir problem there is need for developing a greater understanding in intelligentsia in

India, Pakistan and Kashmir.

There has been a section of India and Pakistan intelligentsia who has remained deeply associated with the developments in the state during past twenty years. Some of them for their deeper association with young Kashmir leadership had become most popular names in Srinagar Press. The names that remained in circulation for longer times in Srinagar media were Kuldip Nayar, Rajinder Sachar, Tapan Bose, Sumantra Bose, Bharat Bushan, OP Shah, Gautam Nevlakhi and Anagana Chaterjee. The credible voices from New Delhi that visited Srinagar besides protesting against the human rights violations in the State by and large identified themselves with political leadership that was open to ideas and had shown some flexibility for finding a solution of Kashmir problem. Some even worked hard for breaking the impasse on Kashmir with the Hurriyat Conference and leaders outside it and also with Pakistan. Many worked as self-appointed envoys of New Delhi and some with a brief from the Government of India had meeting with majority of top and second wrung leadership of the state. It cannot be denied some of these intellectuals retain their good will in the state. This holds true about Pakistan as well. A section of intelligentsia in that country also has remained deeply associated with the developments in Kashmir. Mushahid Hussain Sayed, journalist turned politician has been amongst very few Pakistani intellectuals known in the academic and intellectual circles of Kashmir. He has a significant role to play in Kashmir affairs. He attracted the attention of Kashmiri intellectuals in early nineties for his writings on Kashmir in a Pakistan National Daily that he edited. Other Pakistani intellectuals who often talked about Kashmir were Prof Khurshid, Prof Iqbal Cheema, Zahid Malik, Naseem Zehra, Dr Shirin Mizari and Mr. Nizami of the Nawa-e-Waqat group. Besides them there was a host of former diplomats who not only talked about Kashmir but also wrote in Pakistan and other international press about the problem. Majority of these intellectual identified themselves with what is termed as the "Kashmir Cause" and raised their voice against the happenings in Kashmir. But these intellectuals after the former Pakistan President, General Pervez Musharraf came up with his four point formula, preferred to maintain silence on Kashmir. He discovered a new group of intellectual like Nejem Sethi to support his vague ideas for the resolution of Kashmir dispute. The Indian intelligentsia, that by and large were off the Kashmir scene after New Delhi was engaged with Pakistan on track two for finding a solution of Kashmir, started reappearing in Srinagar after the July-August 2008 agitation that had seen millions converging on the streets of Srinagar. In the wake of these developments, they reestablished their contacts with Kashmir leaders espousing the cause of right to self-determination. Some prominent New Delhi based non-governmental organization reinitiated their activities and held seminars and conference at Srinagar. Some see New Delhi's renewed initiative in Kashmir as cause of the efforts made by these New Delhi based intellectuals and interlocutors.

It is a fact that there exists variability of perceptions amongst the Indian and Pakistani intellectuals on the resolution of Kashmir dispute and each group has been looking at it from a different vantage point. But what has been encouraging is that each of the groups is no shyer of talking about the dispute. It will be too wrong to say that intellectuals of the two countries are watching the developments in the South Asian region as mute spectators. The Kashmir Diaspora organizations like the Kashmiri American Council, Justice Foundation London, and World Kashmir Freedom

Movement, Kashmir Centre Brussels and many other organization by organizing international conferences and bringing India and Pakistan intellectuals and opinion makers face to face with each other have made a good contribution in bridging the gap between them. It is true that a lot more needs to be done for bringing in greater understanding amongst them that could pave way for ending uncertainty in Jammu and Kashmir and wading of clouds of nuclear war from the sub-continent.

Now when there is lot of talk about dialogue between New Delhi and a section of Kashmir leadership, let me reiterate what I had written a couple of years back when New Delhi had succeeded in attracting some "pro-freedom" leaders for participating in the elections and fielding proxy candidates, " One needs to understand that something more than "a shallow truce or a patchwork arrangement" needs to be worked out. The key line of the intellectuals of India and Pakistan can be in the words of a Kashmiri intellectual, Mohammed Yousuf Buch, "That Kash-

mir Dispute cannot be settled by the United Nations but it will never be settled without the United Nation". To find out a lasting solution for Kashmir problem that would bring in lasting peace in the region, the intelligentsia in India, Pakistan and Kashmir will have to pool their ideas.
Repeating 75: Scope and Limitations

Three newspaper headlines:

Ready to sit with NC, PDP and Hurriyat

Congress to clear the decks: Soz

Won't dissolve House: Omar Abdullah;

That got banner slots in the Greater Kashmir past week continue to resonate in the hinterland of my mind. The newspaper issues that carried these headlines have found their way to archives in my study, perhaps never to be retrieved. But the headlines continue to engage my attention: if they need to be read between the lines or dismissed as of no consequences.

The three headlines build a perspective that makes one to think that if the situation in the state was building up for having an agreement or pact on the lines of the 1975- Indira-Sheikh Accord. This accord had seen end of the movement for right to self-determination led by the Jammu and Kashmir Plebiscite Front for twenty two years. It had brought Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah back into power after having been deposed, imprisoned and banished from the state for about fifteen years. Having been a close witness to the happenings in the seventies that led to the Accord, I did find some similarity in the statements recently made by three leaders belonging to the National Conference, Congress and the Hurriyat Conference (M) and the then leadership in New Delhi and Srinagar. The three leaders obviously had a mandate to make these statements. The statements not only speak about the stand of their parties but also can be seen as casting of a dye for the future political developments in the state.

Prof. Abdul Gani Bhat, who was nominated by the All Parties Hurriyat Conference executive council to represent its point of view at a seminar titled Multiparty Dialogue on the Political Future of Jammu and Kashmir organized by the PDP at New Delhi made a significant statement:

"His party was willing to work with the National Conference and the Peoples Democratic Party for evolving a consensus and move together for a better and prosperous tomorrow. We have to take a step forward. We shall have to have to live together, sink and swim together for future of Kashmir. Politics is about reconciliation and balancing of opinion of common people of Jammu and Kashmir." I may not join the debate, if the statement made by the top Hurriyat (M) leader was his personal opinion or it had the stamp of the executive council of his party. Since no disciplinary action has been taken against him for departing from the party position. One can without fear of contradiction construe that his statement needs to be seen as a paradigm shift of the multi-party combine.

The statement made by Hurriyat (M) bears closer affinity to the statements made by Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and his lieutenant Miriza Muhammad Afzal Beg after the 1968 State Peoples Convention failed to evolve a consensus amongst various political parties for finding an alternative solution outside the UN resolution for the Kashmir problem. The statements made by the Plebiscite Front leadership after the 1968 convention indicated some changes in the mood of the leadership. Though the demand for holding of a plebiscite as in the state under the aegis of the United Nations persisted in these statements, but they also mentioned about the suffering of people because of bad governance and lack of development. The statements were a prelude to the Front deciding to contest the coming elections for the Parliament and the Assembly that it had been boycotting since 1957. But the New Delhi did not show positive response towards the new posture. It despite having convinced some of the organizations demanding plebiscite to participate directly or field proxy candidates was apprehensive about the Front contesting the elections. The Congress leadership in power in the state lobbied against the participation of the Front in the elections at New Delhi. It succeeded in convincing the power centers that Sheikh Abdullah was planning trouble inside the Assembly that could embarrass GOI at the international level.

The leadership at New Delhi was not averse to the Front contesting the election but it wanted it on its own terms and conditions. Sheikh Abdullah wanted to contest elections in the name of the Plebiscite Front

but leaders like Ghulam Muhammad Shah had toyed with the idea of reviving the National Conference for contesting the elections. In July 1970, Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi made it abundantly Clear, "the accession of the state was a part of history and history could not be reversed or changed. Kashmir question was settled for ever." Taking an alibi of the activities of an underground organization, some members of which were believed to have closer link with the Plebiscite Front founder, the organization was banned under the Prevention of Unlawful Activities Act and most of leaders of the organization were put behind the bars. Most of the newspaper in New Delhi had decried the ban and victory of the Congress in the state elections. It may not be possible to recount all the developments that took place in the state and the subcontinent during 1971 and 1972 in this column, but many factors including Pakistan's ever humiliating defeat in the then East Pakistan worked as a catalyst for the Front leadership making an about turn and announcing that there was no difference between New Delhi and Kashmir leadership on the question of accession. Sheikh Abdullah in a letter wrote to Mrs. Gandhi, "The accession of the state of Jammu and Kashmir to India was no issue. It has been my firm belief that the future of Jammu and Kashmir lies with India because of common ideals that we share. I hope you would appreciate that the sole purpose of my agreeing to cooperate at the political and governmental levels is to enable the State Government to initiate measures for the well-being of the people of the State which I have considered as my sacred trust. It will be my constant endeavor to ensure that the state of Jammu and Kashmir continues to make contribution to the sovereignty, integrity and progress of nation."

Looking at the statement made by the Hurriyat(M) spokesperson at seminar, I see same kind of sentiment expressed but the question arises will the New Delhi ask the Congress-National Coalition to clear the decks for the Hurriyat (M) same way as it did for Sheikh Abdullah and Plebiscite Front. True, the Pradesh Congress chief did hint at facilitating the dialogue and clearing the decks but the Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah made it abundantly clear that he won't dissolve the House.

The Congress also did not dissolve the house but it made a departure from conventions by electing a non-elect and non-congressman as

their party leader. Can congress led government at New Delhi repeat this unconventional practice again is the question that dominates the discussion with a faction of the APHC (M). It is true that Mirwaiz Omar Farooq at public meeting said that his Conglomerate was not for "power transfer or Package but seeks political solution." But the most important question that arises is, if the APHC(M) was on the same strong pedestal on which the PF was in seventies. It would be unjust to compare the two.

In seventies if Sheikh Abdullah was not the only leader of the state but it cannot be disputed that he was the leader with overwhelming mass base all over the state. Others had pockets of influence, some confined to couple of wards within Srinagar Municipal limits and some had cadres in most parts of the state but did not enjoy the mass support. At the time of initiation of dialogue with Sheikh Abdullah, New Delhi was convinced about two important things, one, that Sheikh was the only leader and the Plebiscite Front mattered the most so far as the movement for right to self-determination was concerned and second, it was convinced "Sheikh was an estranged nationalist", as was candidly stated by Mrs. Gandhi in her statement on Feb 24, 1975, in the Parliament, "Sheikh Abdullah had played notable part in the accession of the state with Indian Union...despite his estrangement it seemed clear from the public statement made by him that his commitment to basic national ideals and objective had remained unchanged. It would be wrong to compare 1975 situation to that of the situation as obtains in 2009. Ostensibly, there seems no reason New Delhi asking the NC-Congress coalition to abdicate power in favor of a group or party in the state for facilitating them to come to power in the state.

The statement about working with the National Conference and the PDP made by the APHC leader in New Delhi does not portend anything other than vagueness and dilemmas that has taken over the APHC (M). Geelani's Testament I believed. And I do believe that Kashmir movement has all along suffered an intellectual famine. If there has been any intellectual input to our movement at any point of time it has been from outside. It is a historical reality whatever little intellectual content our struggle against the feudal autocracy had, it came from outside. It has been for the intellectual content in our struggle that it has moved

from dark tunnels to the darker tunnels. Sometime back in my search for an Edward Said or Franz Fanon for bearing a torch that could lead people out of depressing and pitch dark tunnels, I failed to find an icon figure, and perhaps made a bold statement that there is no Edward Said or Franz Fanon on our side.

My writing turned earlobes of some activists red and enraged a school time friend who has been in Kashmir struggle from the age of fourteen and undoubtedly is an embodiment of sacrifices. I wrote, in our parched intellectual landscape the poetry and writings of Allama Muhammad Iqbal are an oasis. I concluded that for Kashmir and Kashmiris he will remain an icon for many more decades to come and his poetry and writings will lead us through the perils that come in the way of our freedom and peace. It was on the other day, when Syed Ali Geelani at selected gathering of about a hundred people released second volume of his book "Ruh-e-Din Ka Shinasa Iqbal," that I was reminded of the statement that I had made two years back and my belief got further strengthened that Iqbal continues to be the leader to deliver people out of the dark tunnels of uncertainty.

I had not made the statement, "that Iqbal will continue to guide Kashmir intelligentsia and people till the time another Iqbal is born in his ancestral land for as founder of Kashmir struggle. It was not for his heading Kashmir Committee at an important juncture of our history and for giving voice to voiceless people of the state in other parts of India in thirties. It was not for his poetry which energized people of the erstwhile entire state of Jammu and Kashmir to tear the Sale Deed, under which Kashmiri had been sold as merchandise to shreds but I looked at him as one around whom Kashmiri would rally for many more decades to come. But it was my belief that he was one of the greatest political philosopher of the twentieth century whose ideas have the potential of surviving the tides and times.

I found a supporter of my idea, that Iqbal will continue to be an icon around which Kashmiris will rally, in Syed Ali Geelani, after going through second volume of his book on the poet.

Iqbal was a great poet. In a span of less than hundred years more than five thousand books have been written on him. Many popularly call him as poet-philosopher of the East. True, his main interests were

scholarly but I often have been looking at him as a political philosopher and statesman who was deeply concerned about the political situation of the sub-continent. It was both political isolation and suppression of Muslims in India that had become his concern. Absorbing the teaching of Shibli, Ameer Ali, Hasrat Mohani and other great Indian Muslim thinkers and politicians, listening to Hindu and British voices, and watching the Indian scene closely for approximately 60 years, he gave content to the ideas of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan about the future of Indian Muslims. He was a man with great political foresight and wisdom. Some see divine insight in his political wisdom. He had a political foresight. In December 1931 when he was invited to Cambridge to address students, he referred to what he had said in 1906. "I would like to offer a few pieces of advice to the youngmen who are at present studying at Cambridge ..... I advise you to guard against atheism and materialism. The biggest blunder made by Europe was the separation of Church and State. This deprived their culture of moral soul and diverted it to the atheistic materialism. I saw through, twenty-five years ago, the drawbacks of this civilization and therefore made some prophecies. They, though delivered through my tongue, yet I did not quite understand them. This happened in 1907..... After six or seven years, my prophecies came true, word by word. The European war of 1914 was an outcome of the aforesaid mistakes made by the European nations in the separation of the Church and the State."

Iqbal was not only just a theorist who propounded the idea of a separate Muslim state but also guided it so that it gets translated into reality. The letters written by him to Muhammad Ali Jinnah during 1936 and 1937 fully testify that he understood the nuances and undercurrents of the movements of the Muslims and had clarity of vision about it reaching to a logical conclusion. These letters written over a period of one year testify his mastery over the political statecraft. Quaid Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in his introduction to letters from Iqbal published for the first time tells us about the statesmanship of Iqbal in these words:

"I think these letters are of very great historical importance, particularly those which explain his views in clear and unambiguous terms on the political future of Muslim India. His views were substantially in

consonance with my own and had finally led me to the same conclusions as a result of careful examination and study of the constitutional problems facing India, and found expression in due course in the united will of Muslim India as adumbrated in the Lahore resolution of the All India Muslim League, popularly known as the Pakistan Resolution, passed on March 23, 1940."

Though Geelani Sahib has not benefitted from the prose writings of Iqbal and has confined himself mostly to his Persian poetry yet from his book Iqbal, the political thinker and statesman, makes his presence felt very vividly. The organizers of the release of the second volume of the book called the function as a literary function, but I see the 392 page book, "Ruh-e-Din Ka Shinasa Iqbal" as Syed Ali Geelani's testament for the posterity. Iqbal had no interest in poetic artistry. But had a special goal in mind and for its expression he used the medium of poetry". In tune with the spirit of Iqbal's poetry he has used the idiom of Iqbal poetry for identifying pit holes and conveying his ideas about Kashmir "struggle and freedom". The book spreading over thirty chapters is a political treatise that encompasses Kashmir struggle and global politics in Iqbal's idioms. The first chapter of the book is titled , (Marde hur) "the free man". In this chapter through the poetry of Iqbal he conveys his ideas about the freedom and the freeman. He writes, "One of Iqbal's poem is titled as the freeman. In this poem he writes about a freeman. Every human being has an urge for freedom. Freedom is cry from the conscience, it cannot be suppressed and it cannot be denied... It is only humans who struggle for freedom, it is only humans who are chained and suffer under slavery". He dwells in detail upon the sufferings of the chained and oppressive tactics of oppressors." He rekindles a faith in people quoting from Iqbal's poetry and asks him to imbibe the qualities of freeman as envisaged by Iqbal.

Like a master craftsman, Geelani has used Iqbal's poetry for commenting on disappointments of contemporary Kashmir politics and quoting profusely from the great poet of the East, he suggests ways and means for removing the clouds of disappointment from the political horizons of the state. He writes:

"In contemporary times wings of the slave nations are clipped. The contours of their culture and civilization are erased. Doors to their moral and material progress are latched. Roads of freedom from the cordons and clutches of oppressors are blocked. The slave nations are made subservient for everything perceivable. Confusions worst confounded are created. And crooks called politicians melodiously and sonorously tell these caged birds, you unlucky bird, make your nest in hunters home. They tell these caged birds if you do not make your nest in hunter's home you will be prey to hawks and wild animals."

The book is not only a grand commentary on contemporary situation in Kashmir but Syed Ali Geelani's gospel for posterity.

Geelani through the idiom of Iqbal's poetry has succeeded in reaching out to the new generation of Kashmiri and made them believe that in all bizarre political situations it is Iqbal's ideas, thoughts and philosophies that can serve as guiding star for them. Discourse Versus Dialogue Sixty two years is not a small period. The Afghans ruled Kashmir for sixty seven years (1752-1819). The Sikhs colonized it for twenty seven years (1819-1846). But the barbs of these rules continue to cause even today pain in the neck of Kashmiris. A month or so hence "Kashmir Dispute" or "Issue" or "problem", whatever you like to call it will be completing six decades and two years on the agenda of the United Nations Security Council. On January 1, 1948, invoking Articles 34 and 35 of the United Nations, India took the Kashmir problem to the Security Council. In its complaint before this international organization it blamed Pakistan government of aiding its nationals and tribesmen "in the invasion of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It called Pakistan "aggressor". I am not to dwell on the dominant debate amongst some European, American and Sub-continental historians about the tribesmen joining the "poor Muslim peasants" of Poonch who had revolted against Rajput landlords. Many an Indian historian including official biographer of Jawaharlal Nehru first Prime Minister of India, M.J. Akbar has blamed him of internationalizing Kashmir when it could have been resolved bilaterally. M.J. Akbar has pronounced taking of Kashmir problem to the Security Council as Nehru's blunder. Pakistan made a successful cross complaint before the United Nations. Top American historian and South-Asian expert, Stanly Wolpert writes: "Jinnah had no strength to fly to New York, but Foreign Minister Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan performed brilliantly as Pakistan's advocate before the

Security Council; he was judicious, articulate, and often eloquent in presenting his case while refuting India's charges"(Jinnah of Pakistan).

Kashmir problem ever since this day has been a part of the global discourse. It has dominated international debates on the floor of the Security Council and outside. Seen in right perspective during the cold war, not only South-Asian, but global politics got hinged to this issue. The issue for its getting enmeshed in the cold war politics not only failed a resolution but contributed to perpetuation of animosity between India and Pakistan. It caused collision between Islamabad and New Delhi in the diplomatic arenas and the battle fields. The two countries despite committing themselves more than once to resolve the dispute through bilateral negotiations, often slipped into the global discourse. Sometimes it dominated the international relations as prominently as issues like Palestine and Afghanistan and sometimes it was relegated to the backburner. In 2008, with about a million converging on the roads it once again made to the international headlines. It set many an opinion makers in India come out strongly in support of the resolution of the problem. Many an international opinion makers consider this issue as a dangerous nuclear flashpoint in South Asian region with worldwide ramifications. Many important voices in New Delhi not only voiced their concern over the non-resolution but made bolder statements emboldening political leadership to take daring initiatives for resolving the issue.

The year 2009, dawned with the US President Barrack Obama identifying "diplomatic solution to the Kashmir conflict as a "critical task for his new administration." It was for the first time after the end of the cold war that Kashmir problem started gaining centrality in the US South Asia policy that has a lot of bearing on domestic policies of the only global power. Ever since Barrack Obama took over, it has been the belief with the United States that the resolution of Afghan crisis passes through Kashmir. True, the United States failed to live up to its envisaged policy of appointing former President Bill Clinton as its special envoy on Kashmir. It is also true that New Delhi lobbyists in Washington succeeded in getting Kashmir deleted from the brief of Richard Holbrook, US Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan but it would be naïve to believe that he is not actively engaged in Kashmir affairs.

The debate over Kashmir is no more confined to some senators like Dan Burton but of late has been getting lot of attention of the US think tanks and the civil society. The Harvard Kennedy School's Car Centre for Human Rights has been holding Kashmir Initiative lecture series "for the Human Rights Policy for the World's Most Militarized Dispute" involving lots of students and has been focusing on the resolution of the problem.

Kashmir besides the United States and the European Union during past few months has engaged the attention of many other important countries. It unexpectedly after a gap of many years resounded on the floor of the United Nations at its 64th annual meeting after Libyan President, Muammar Gaddafi called upon India and Pakistan to grant complete independence to the State. Besides the problem finding an echo inside magnificent hall of the United Nations, it dominated the discussions on the sidelines of the annual meet of the comity of nations. The OIC group besides adopting a resolution calling for peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute in line with the UN resolutions also appointed a Special Envoy on Kashmir. The appointment of OIC envoy, true, has not so far taken any initiative but it would be wrong to belittle the diplomatic importance of the move.

Historically,China undoubtedly has been supporting Pakistan stand on Kashmir in all international forums. It has been a strong advocate of right to self determination for people of the state as laid down in the United Nations resolution but stance on this problem during past few months has been significant. Its Kashmir policy manifested by not pasting visa to citizens of Jammu and Kashmir on Indian Passport suggests it being more proactive than that of Pakistan. The statements by NATO and other organization calling for resolution of Kashmir may be seen as an important development but what has been more significant is the unanimity of ideas between China and USA on Kashmir. This unanimity that speaks about the two working in tandem in the region found an expression during Barrack Obama's visit to Peking. It may be too early to suggest where this global discourse is leading to but it has now been punctuated with the APHC(M) and New Delhi talking of a dialogue. There has been lot of drum beating about dialogue after Home Minister; P. Chidambaram during his visit to Srinagar on Oct 15, 2009 con-

veyed his readiness to talk to all shades of opinion in the state including the "separatists". There were many a positive notes in Home Ministers press conference that set many a Kashmir watchers within and outside the state to look for paradigm shift in New Delhi's stated Kashmir policy. The Hurriyat Conference (M) which has been religiously pursuing resumption of dialogue with New Delhi after the snapping of the same after 2005, over the question of participation in the round table conferences in Srinagar jumped over the idea and expressed its readiness to talk to New Delhi.

The question that is being debated in the political circles as well as by the civil Society in Srinagar for past few weeks has been if the proposed dialogue with New Delhi leads to the ending of uncertainty in the region and finding solution of the dispute. India and Pakistan, ever since the birth of the "dispute" have been holding dialogue both on the back and front channels and at all levels for finding an amicable settlement of the dispute. But, there is no history of New Delhi ever having had a dialogue with Kashmir leaders for deciding the future political status of the state. There have been two important pacts between New Delhi and Srinagar, one, the Delhi Agreement of 1952 and another Indira-Sheikh Accord of 1975, but both these pacts were for delineating the constitutional relations of the state of Jammu and Kashmir with the Union of India. It is ironical that Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and his lieutenant and envoy during three years deliberations with Mrs. Gandhi's envoy often asserted that the talks were for arriving at an interim arrangement for paving way for final settlement. But, the Six Point Accord signed by them was nothing but reiteration of the status of the State within Union of India. It will be an exercise in evasion if yet another dialogue talking for an interim arrangement on the pattern of 1973 is initiated. But it will be making history if the Congress led UPA government holds a dialogue with Mirwaiz Umar Farooq on deciding the political future of the state. It is not important which methodology of dialogue is pursued, whether it is back channel, front channel, quite dialogue, proximity talks, bilateral, trilateral or tripartite talks, but what is important is the agenda for the dialogue, acceptable to all the contending parties.

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